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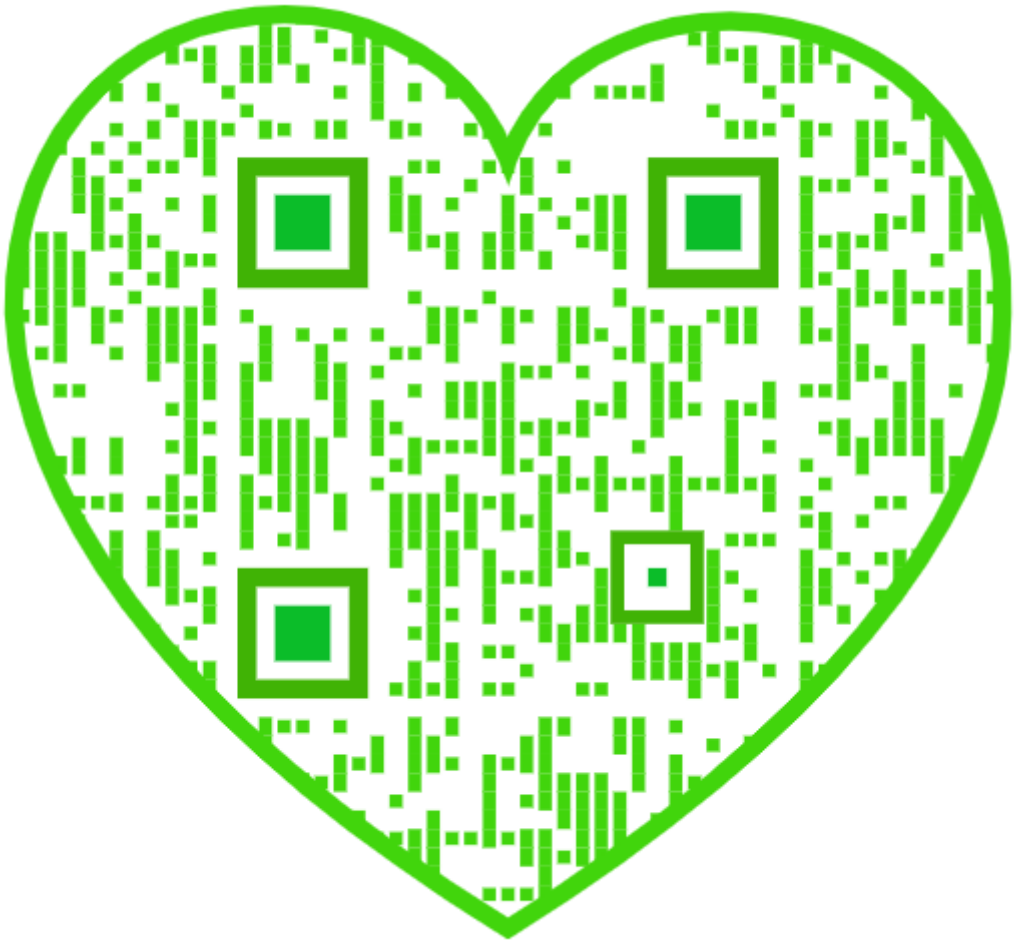
Fish and Fishing

J. J. MANLEY M.A.



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NOTES

ON

FISH AND FISHING.

By J. J. MANLEY, M.A.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Quicquid agunt *pisces* nostri est farrago libelli."
(*Slightly altered from*) JUVENAL.

London:
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PREFACE.

"GENTLE" READER—or, as probably I may call you, "Brother Angler"—and you, too, gentle or ungentle critic, as the case may be, please take the trouble to run through these few introductory lines. Nothing is more unfair to an author than to read or "dip into" his book before seeing what he has to say about it in his Preface. In this you will often find that he explains the scope and plan (or perhaps absence of plan) of his work, and tells his readers what to expect and what not. Thus, to some extent he is able, by way of anticipation, to protect himself against unfair objections which might be alleged against his performance, and to escape the wrath of some readers who might be disappointed at not finding what they expected to find, and what the author never meant they should find.

Let me, then, say a word or two by way of explanation in reference to these "Notes." They are not intended to form a book of methodical *instruction* for anglers; nor do they pretend to be exhaustive of the subjects treated of. They are written on no very definite plan, though it will be seen that those which deal with the different fish con-

secutively run to some extent in the same groove, the observations on the nomenclature of our fish, their natural history, and their gastronomic merits and demerits, taking up a far larger space than the remarks bearing on their capture. This little volume is really an unambitious one, as I wish its title to imply. I might almost call it a simple selection of "Notes" from my commonplace book on angling, and from the enormous mass of piscine and piscatorial memoranda and extracts which have gradually accumulated round me; or a collection of "chit-chat" and "gossip" for anglers; or, once again, a mere *farrago*—or a "hodge-podge"—of more or less disjointed remarks on Fish and Fishing, the result of many years of observation, reading, and experience in reference to the "gentle art."

If I may venture to say that my book has a special feature, that feature consists in the first four "Notes," the second of which, on the "*Literature of Fishing*," deals more fully with a subject than I believe it has been dealt with before. Another feature is the introduction of a large number of quotations from and references to other authors, ancient and modern. I had an idea that such quotations and references might be both interesting and useful to many of my readers. Let me add, that if in any case I have quoted the words of an author without distinctly acknowledging my indebtedness, I trust the fact may be put down to inadvertence rather than design.

But if this be all I have to say on behalf of my book, it may be asked, "What, then, is its *raison d'être?*" and "Why add another volume to the already heavily-laden shelves of angling literature?" I can only answer that it pleased me to write it, and an eminent firm of publishers, whose house stands, appropriately enough in this

instance, on the spot where old Isaak Walton lived for many years, to publish it. Moreover, anglers, both old and young, seem ever ready for a new book on angling, whatever form it may assume; and I have been told or read that there are no less than 500 persons in the United Kingdom who make a practice of buying every fresh addition to the literature of fishing. Thus, to say the least of it, by producing this volume I am giving readers and collectors of angling books an opportunity of indulging their respective fancies.

I shall say no more in what may seem the direction of an apology for my book, for I do not feel that any apology is really needed. I will only add that I shall be quite satisfied if my readers and "brother anglers" receive a tithe of the pleasure in perusing these "Notes" which I have experienced in putting them together. *Scribere jussit amor.*

August, 1877.

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NOTES ON FISH AND FISHING.

NOTE I.

ICHTHYOLOGY.

"*Nature's great and wonderful power is more demonstrated in the waters than on land.*"—PLINY.

Classification of fish—Their structure—"Queer fish"—Hybrids—Senses of fish: vision, hearing, smelling, tasting—Do fish sleep?—Do fish feel pain?—Tenacity of life—Diseases of fish—Food and digestive powers—Change of colour in fish—Do fish talk?—Books on ichthyology.

LET me at the outset say that in these "Notes" I shall use the terms "Angler" and "Fisherman" as synonymous, though I am quite aware that the former is the correct name to be applied to those who fish with *hooks; ἀγκών,* "the elbow," Latin *Angulus,* which originally signified anything *bent,* being probably the origin of the word, unless indeed we refer it to the German *Anken,* to fix, pierce, or to the Dutch *Hanghen,* to "hang." It is not, of course, necessary that an angler be a Zoologist, or even an Ichthyologist, to enjoy his pursuit; but the more he knows of and studies natural history the greater the pleasure will he get out of his angling excursions. Certainly he should know something

of the natural history of the creatures which are the objects of his sport, as, indeed, should all sportsmen in their several departments, and not pursue their quarry as mere savages. He will be amply rewarded by his studies, which will show him that fish are really the most interesting of all the great Classes of the animal world, and still present the widest field for observation and investigation.

I am not, however, about to trouble my readers with any attempt at a learned discussion on ichthyology, or write a criticism on the scientific and unscientific Classifications of fish from the time of Aristotle down to the naturalists of the present day. Let Gesner, Buffon, Linnæus, Cuvier, Huxley, Owen, and a host of other learned authors be read by angler-naturalists as they have leisure; but suffice it for our present purpose to say that Fish belong to the great *Vertebrate* division of the Animal Kingdom as opposed to the *Invertebrate*, and that they are one of its great Classes, whether we take the Six Classes of Linnæus, the Mammalia, Birds, Reptiles, Ashes, Insects, and Worms, or the nine or more classes of other naturalists. The Orders and Sub-orders, Families and Sub-families, Sections and Sub-sections, into which fish have been divided and subdivided, are almost as numerous as the Chapters with their Sections and Sub-sections to which Burton, that most wondrous of "book-makers," has treated his readers in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Various too have been the principles on which fish have been divided and subdivided. Professor Owen, I believe, has classified them according to their Bones, or, to speak more scientifically, their "osseous structure;" while another and most interesting prin-

ciple of classification is that adopted by M. Agassiz, who divides them into Four Classes according to the formation of their Scales, thus—1. The Placoid, or flat-scaled (from the Greek πλακοῦς, a flat cake); 2. the Ganoid, or polished-scaled (from the Greek γανόω, to polish); 3. the Ctenoid, or tooth-scaled (from the Greek κτείς, a comb); 4. the Cycloid, or circular-scaled (from the Greek κύκλος, a circle). To the first, or Placoid class, belong sharks, dog-fish, skates, and other cartilaginous fish, or fish without real bones; to the second, or Ganoid class, belong the sturgeon, who is also cartilaginous but "armour-plated" with bony plates, and many fish now only known to us in their fossil state. To the third, or Ctenoid class, belong perch, pope or ruff, and pike; and to the fourth, or Cycloid class, carp, salmon, eels, and most of our edible fresh and salt-water fish. Many valuable characteristics of fish have been ascertained from the formations of their Scales, as also from the disposition of the Teeth, which are respectively situate upon the jaws, palate, tongue, and throat, and severally constructed for prehension, cutting, or crushing, thus indicating the character of food mostly taken by the several species. The age of fish may also be ascertained from their scales when examined under a strong microscope.

For the purpose of angler-naturalists who do not care to go very deeply into ichthyology it will suffice to divide fish into the two great Orders of *Acanthopterygii* and *Malacopterygii*, which (derived from Greek words) respectively signify "Spiny or prickly-finned" and "Soft-finned" fish. Of the different fish with which I deal in these "Notes," the perch, the ruff, the bull-head, and the

stickleback belong to the first-named class, as "prickular" demonstration often brings home to the incautious angler; while to the "Soft-finned" tribe, which may be handled with impunity, at least as regards their fins, belong the carp and all other fish I treat of, with the exception of the lampern, which belongs to the *Plectognathi* order (so named from the arrangement of the maxillary bones); and the cray-fish, which is, strictly speaking, no fish at all, but an *Invertebrate* animal, and a member of the great Class called "Crustacea." But under the two chief Orders above-named we must, for perspicuity sake, and at the same time to add to our interest in our captures, range the respective "Families" of fish. These are many, but Four only need concern us here, namely, the *Percidæ* family, which, of course, is represented by our perch; the *Salmonidæ*, by trout and grayling; the *Esocidæ*, by pike; while the *Cyprinidæ*, or carp family, comprises the great bulk of our fresh-water fish, viz. the common carp, barbel, bream, tench, roach, dace, chub, gudgeon, bleak, and minnow.

The Structure of fish and their animal organization present almost endless subjects of interest and admiration. Though they live in the water, yet atmospheric air (oxygen) is equally the *pabulum vitæ* of fish and fishermen. Just as *our* warm red blood is purified and restored in its vital and arterial qualities by air passing through our lungs, so is the cold red blood of fish by passing through their gills; and as by the process of breathing we extract the oxygen and so vitiate the air, in like manner do fish taking the water in at their mouths extract from it the air held in suspension, and pass it out under the gill-covers in a vitiated state. A man sub-

merged in water cannot extract air enough from it; a fish submerged in distilled water, which is water *minus* air, can get none at all, and the result is the same in both cases; and as most anglers know, or should know, a fish drawn down stream is simply *drowned* because the water is thus prevented entering its mouth in the usual way and escaping through the gill-covers. For the same reason fish making their way down stream for any distance travel, for the most part, tail first, at least so I have heard and read. An angler, therefore, when in combat with a big fish need not fear being laughed at as being

"Like those sages that would drown a fish."

The "migratory" fish of India, i.e. fish which travel overland from tanks and rivers, when drying up, in search of more suitable lodgings, illustrate the fact that fish to a great extent live by air. These fish will remain out of water some days, the little sponge-like structure in each cheek holding enough moisture to enable them to exist for this time out of their natural element; and we know that fish kept in wet moss will live for a very considerable period. How wonderfully are the Gills (*branchiæ*) of fish constructed! They are formed of numerous arches, bordered by a kind of fringe, which, when examined through a microscope, is seen to be covered by a velvet-like membrane, over which myriads of minute blood-vessels are spread, finer than the most delicate network. Over these the current of water equally flows, and the air is taken up by the blood, which is sent to the gills from the heart, distributed throughout the body, by means of arteries, and returned by the veins to the heart again. Thus, in answer to the 3rd Fisherman in *Pericles*, who said, "Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea," the 1st Fisherman

might have confined his reply to the words, "Why, as men do on land," without the addition, "the great ones eat up the little ones."

How admirably, too, are fish formed! Their elongate, oval, compressed configuration, and their smooth covering suiting them exactly to the element in which they live and move; while from a continuous series of scales, marked by what is called the "lateral line" (visible on almost every fish from its gill-covers to its tail), and pierced with a tube near their centre, a slimy, glutinous matter, secreted by glands beneath, is exuded, which not only preserves the surface of the body from the action of the water, but also decreases the friction, as does the composition laid on the bottom of a racing boat.

Nor less suited to their purposes are the various Fins of fish, of which, by the way, the angler should know the proper names. There are the two *Pectoral*, or breast fins, which may be called the fore legs of a fish; the one or two *Dorsal*, or back fins; the *Ventral*, or belly fins; the *Anal* fin, between the belly fins and the tail; and the *Caudal* fin, the tail itself. The last-mentioned gives them their chief means of propulsion; the *dorsal* and *anal* fins effect their lateral movements; elevation and depression are promoted by the *pectoral*; and quiescent suspension by the *ventral* fins; though the "air," or "swimming bladder," a membranous pouch situated close under the spine, and capable of compression or expansion according to the will of the fish, is their chief means of raising or depressing themselves without any apparent use of the fins at all.

The Strength of fish is very great; and I do not think I am wrong in saying that they are, for their size, the strongest of all *Vertebrate* animals. If I remember rightly,

Professor James Rennie has a chapter, illustrated with diagrams, on the "Strength of Fish," in his *Alphabet of Scientific Angling*. A screw propeller of a modern iron-clad is but a toy compared with the caudal fin of some fish, say of the barbel. The Fecundity of fish, their habits of Spawning, and the laws which influence them, are again almost inexhaustible topics of interest.

For their wondrous construction, and adaptation to their conditions of existence, fish, as I have already intimated, are in my opinion the most interesting creatures in the animal world, and by no means the least beautiful. For beauty of symmetry and colouring several of our British fresh-water fish are conspicuous, while we are not troubled by those strange and hideous monstrosities found in other waters. Nor, again, can we boast many "queer" fish, such as the "flour fish" of China, with its black eyes; or the strange variety of carps which have been produced by "culture" in the "Flowery Land," in the shape of gold fish with tails manifold, and other abnormal developments; or the "crying fish" of that same wonderful country, and the "swimming cow," or "tree-climbing perch" (*Anabas Scandens*—why have naturalists given this fish two names, one from the Greek the other from the Latin, both meaning the same thing—"a getting up stairs"?), or the curious fish of Guiana, "with four eyes, two on each side, one pair of which it keeps above and the other below the water as it swims;" or Siamese-twin fish, a specimen of which is recorded to have been caught in Canadian waters in 1833; but we have the "Croaking Trout" of the Carraclwddy pools in Wales, which certainly do utter something like a "croak" when taken, a peculiarity accounted for by some as the effects of their bewitchment by the monks of Strata

Florida Abbey, and by others as an attempt on the part of the poor captives to utter their complaints in the Welsh language. We have, too—or perhaps I had better say we had, if an old writer is to be credited—"fish without fins" in Lough Loman, and one-eyed fish in some of the Carnarvonshire lakes, and a peculiar "blue roach" is to be found in a pond on the Dartford marshes in Kent. I know we have blind fish, for I have seen them; but then they had for a long time been excluded from daylight in an underground reservoir of one of the London Water Companies, which shall be nameless.

We probably also have some veritable Hybrids, crosses between carp and roach, and bream and roach, but I will not commit myself on this point, as I believe that most English naturalists hold that there is no such thing as a hybrid among fish. Continental naturalists, on the other hand, maintain that hybrids do exist, and point to a fish which is found in the fresh waters of Eastern Europe, and appears to be an intermediate between the common perch and the pike-perch (*Lucioperca*); and also among sea-fish to the intermediate between the two most common kinds of sea-perch, and to the hybrids between the plaice and the flounder. Professor von Siebold of Munich, a great authority, in his *Fresh-water Fishes of Central Europe*, names no less than five hybrids connected with the *Cyprinidæ* family; one between the common and the Crucian carp, another between the bream and some white fish (*Leuciscus*), a third between the bream and roach, a fourth between the bleak and German chub, which is closely allied to our chub, and the fifth between two fish of the *Cyprinidæ* family, but unknown in our waters. Some years ago experiments by the Rev. Augustus Morgan, of

Macken, seemed to show conclusively that the sea-trout (*Salmo Eriox*) and the common trout (*Salmo Fario*) will produce a veritable hybrid. Mr. Buckland, I believe, in the year 1864, crossed the eggs of a salmon and common trout, but failed to hatch them. Here then, again, is a wide question still open; and I will only add that if there are no such things as hybrid fish, it is most strange; as fish have certainly more favourable conditions for hybridizing than birds, which undoubtedly do produce hybrids.

But for real *monstra informia ingentia* we must look to the sea; as also for the strange forms of fish which have such wonderful resemblance to both animate and inanimate things on land, and which are thus spoken of in a "Contemplation" in "divine Du Bartas:"—

> "God quicken'd in the sea and in the rivers,
> So many fishes of so many features,
> That in the waters we may see all creatures,
> Even all that in the earth are to be found,
> As if the world were in deep waters drown'd.
> For seas, as well as skies, have sun, moon, stars,
> As well as air—swallows, rooks, and stares;
> As well as earth—vines, roses, nettles, melons,
> Mushrooms, pinks, gilliflowers, and many millions
> Of other plants, more rare, more strange than these,
> As very fishes living in the seas;
> As also rams, calves, horses, hares, and hogs,
> Wolves, urchins, lions, elephants, and dogs;
> Yea, men and maids; and which I most admire,
> The mitred bishop and the cowled friar;
> Of which examples but a few years since
> Were shown the Norway and Polonian Prince."

And probably the sea has still in it as many strange fish as ever came out of it, perhaps more strange and wonderful than even Piscator mentioned in his defence of

fishing in Izaak Walton's "First Day." We have, within the last few years, fairly "spotted" the sea-serpent; and, within a day or two of my inditing this note, a notice has appeared in one of our daily newspapers of a veritable merman or man-fish having been distinctly seen by the crews of two ships in different waters, only a week or so ago; not the traditional mermaid exactly, *mulier formosa supernè* who *desinit in piscem*, but a merman, with fine beard and whiskers, though "with slender waist as of a boy of fourteen," ending *en règle*, with "a large forked tail." Dr. Mayer assures us that in 1403 A.D., a mermaid was cast ashore near Haarlem, who was fed on bread and milk, taught to spin, and wore clothes "like any Christian." And as a Christian she was treated after death, for she was buried in a consecrated churchyard, having learnt to make the sign of the cross, though her attempts at speech were not very successful. In 1610 Captain Waithburn is recorded to have seen a mermaid in St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland, who tried to get into his boat, and was only prevented from so doing by one of the men striking her most ungallantly with an oar. Now, however, after a long interval of disappearance, and in this prosaic latter half of the nineteenth century, we have the classic merman tribe coming to the fore again. What a fortune for a public aquarium, if a member of it could be safely "tanked"!

But this is a digression from serious ichthyology. There are many questions most interesting to the angler as well as the ichthyologist in connexion with the Senses of fish. There is that of the Vision of fish; one on which both anglers and naturalists seem to differ, some affirm-

ing that the vision of fish is very perfect, others the contrary. The eye, as Paley has pointed out in his *Natural Theology*, is in its structure well adapted to the element in which the fish lives; but it suggests that fish as a class are near-sighted, and that their vision is considerably impeded by its being covered by the common skin of the head, in order to defend the eyeball, fish, as is well known, having no eyelids. Stoddart, in his *Scottish Angler*, goes so far as to say that a trout "is a remarkably near-sighted fish, and cannot behold any object distinctly however large, unless within the range of eight or ten yards." From this remark, which, by the way, if true of the trout, is true of most other fish, anglers might come to the conclusion that it matters little whether they show themselves or not, and that a great deal too much fuss is made about the colour and size of flies; while, *per contra*, it might be argued that on account of this very defectiveness of vision it is all the more necessary to imitate nature as closely as possible with artificial flies, and that a shadow cast upon the waters, or a form presented which cannot be understood, has all the greater terror. Stewart, however, in his *Practical Angler*, says that "of all senses the trout possesses, that of sight is the most perfect, and is the one which most affects the angler in pursuit of his vocation." Ronald, in his *Flyfisher's Entomology*, takes much the same view, and if his theory of "optical refraction," whereby, as he shows in a diagram, the fisherman is "projected" high up in the air above the fish, is correct, the wonder is how we ever get near a trout at all. We see here, then, how, on this one single question, "doctors differ," and how wide a field is still open for experiment and observation. I will only add that the

majority of practical anglers feel a very strong conviction that fish, and especially trout, have a very keen vision; and we must not forget that trout are able to distinguish a fly long after evening has shaded off into night.

There seems to be a similar difference of opinion among men of learning and men of practice in reference to the Hearing of fish. Cuvier says of fish, "Living in the realms of silence, hearing would be of little use; consequently their ear is reduced to its simplest form, enclosed in the bony walls of the head, deprived of external auricle and internal cochlea, which must prevent them from being aware of any variety of sound." Mr. Ronald, who had an observatory built on the banks of a trout stream for the purpose of noting the habits of the fish, says that repeated experiments of firing guns near trout when only a few inches under water had no effect on them, and therefore comes to the conclusion that anglers need not fear indulging in friendly chat and merry laugh. To him agrees Stewart, and also Stoddart, who says, "They have no sense of hearing whatsoever." *Per contra*, not a few good naturalists maintain that fish have an acute sense of hearing, Professor Wilson, for instance, and John Hunter, the physiologist; the latter of whom says that fish are visibly affected by the firing of a gun—a remark also made by Jesse, in *Gleanings in Natural History*. It seems also to be an established fact that fish in a pond may be trained to come to a person when called by the sound of a bell, or of music, or of the human voice. Probably the solution of the question lies in the theory of vibration—though of course all hearing is by vibration—or as perhaps it might unscientifically be called, "concussion." Water is said to be a good conductor of

sound—though here I fancy there is some confusion as to the difference of sound being conducted *over* water and *through* water—and hence fish get the benefit of it. But here again, I am confronted with the undoubted fact that trout have little perception of sound, as the iron-shod soles of the anglers' wading boots "scrunch" over the rocks and gravel, and any one who has tried the experiment of dropping an iron chain into a river or pond, knows that very little sound above is produced by its falling on the stony bottom; and thus, in one sense, it would seem that water is a bad conductor of sound. But another fact tells strongly the other way; only here noise is made *above* and not under the water. It is the fact that a smart stamp of the foot on the floor of a punt will cause small fish to leap out of the water in all directions many yards distant. I have tried the experiment in the Thames many times when there has been little or no ripple on some broad part of the river, and I have seen small fish leap out as far distant as thirty to forty yards from my punt. Professor Wilson, who contributes a chapter on the "Physiology of Fish," to "Ephemera's" *Handbook of Angling*, after remarking that the ear of a fish, as contrasted with that of a land animal, "is adapted to the rude oscillations of a denser element," says, "fishes must therefore hear with tolerable acuteness, particularly such sounds as occasion a vibration of the element in which they reside, for example, an approaching footstep." I shall certainly not commit myself to any strong expression of opinion on this "hearing" question; but I will venture to give this safe advice to anglers, namely, that though it may not be necessary to be as dumb as members of a Quakers' meeting, it is as

well to give fish the credit of hearing, or something equivalent to hearing, in some way or other, as well as of seeing. Perhaps the discovery that the swimming bladder is physically connected with the ears, or so-called ears of fish, may help towards the solution of this point.

Cognate to those just alluded to is the further question, whether fish are gifted to any considerable extent with the senses of Smell and Taste. The anatomy of a fish shows that the nerves of smell are comparatively large, but several naturalists of mark argue that, from the structure of the nostril and the want of an aerial medium, fish cannot smell at all, and that the nostrils perform a function similar to taste. Stoddart says of trout, that through their power of smell they "discern their food at a singular distance, and will track it, like the sleuth, for many yards." So says an eminent French naturalist. Mr. Ronald, above alluded to, made many experiments from his observatory to test the taste of trout, but confesses that the subject is one of great difficulty. He used to blow them various kinds of food through tubes, and the fact that they took dead house-flies when plastered with cayenne and mustard, seems more than any other to have led him to conclude, that "if the animal had taste, his palate was not peculiarly sensitive." Sir Humphry Davy, in his *Salmonia*, says, "The principal use of the nostrils in fishes, I believe, is to assist in the propulsion of water through the gills, for performing the office of respiration; but I think there are some nerves in these organs which give fishes a sense of the qualities of water, or of substances dissolved in or diffused through it, similar to our sense of smell, or perhaps, rather, our sense of taste; for there can be no doubt that fishes are attracted by scented

worms, which are sometimes used by anglers that employ ground-baits." Possibly the organ of taste in fish, if taste they have, does not reside in the mouth. However, that they have some considerable faculties of taste or smell, or of both combined, is pretty evident from the fact that they are attracted by chemically flavoured pastes and oils. Our forefathers, anglers and naturalists, doubtless talked a great deal of nonsense on this point, but the main fact cannot be denied. Trout are attracted long distances by salmon roe prepared in a certain manner. The fact that trout and perch will sometimes take an artificial worm made, say, of india-rubber, may be used as an argument on both sides of this question; for, on the one hand, it may be argued that they have little taste or smell to take such a thing into their mouths, while on the other, the fact may be adduced that they immediately eject, or try to eject, the treacherous bait thus taken.

Do Fish Sleep?—It may be presumed to start with, that they do; otherwise they would form an exception to all other *Vertebrate* animals. I need hardly say that the fact of their having no eyelids to close would be no bar even to profound sleep. Many human beings sleep with one eye or both eyes open, or partially so—notably infants; and hares are credited with sleeping with both eyes wide open, though I cannot vouch for the truth of the assertion. We may conclude, perhaps, that fish, if they require sleep at all, do not require so much as land animals, which are greater consumers of oxygen, and at the same time have less nerve and muscle in proportion than fish. The physiological cause of, and necessity for, sleep in land animals is the enfeebling of the heart and lungs by voluntary action. A suspension of voluntary action brings

about a recuperation of the vital powers. The conditions of existence in fish are not so very dissimilar from those of land animals, and though their greater muscular strength and greater ease in using it may, as I have said, enable them to dispense with prolonged sleep, they probably could not do without it altogether. It may, however, be suggested that fish in very rapid streams, trout especially, must expend a very great amount of strength in order to "keep their place;" and a big trout, we know, will keep his place almost to an inch for a whole season if not disturbed. But a counter-suggestion may be made to the effect, that at night fish *may* seek the comparatively quiet parts of rivers, "nooks and corners," for sleeping purposes. Still, even in this case, the difficulty occurs as to their being able to really sleep, as it would seem impossible that voluntary action could be altogether suspended. Query—Do they swim in their sleep, as somnambulists walk in their sleep? Of course the case is different in perfectly still waters. But as to the fact whether they sleep or not by night, or whether they take an occasional nap or siesta by day—what is the evidence? No one, as the proverb suggests, ever "caught a weasel asleep," and I do not know of any one who ever caught a fish asleep. A friend of mine, a good angler and ardent naturalist, adduces as evidence of fish sleeping the fact, which he says he has established by experiment and observation—viz. that for about six hours during the night in winter, and about two in summer, no sound of fish moving is to be heard, and none are to be taken by any bait, with the exception of eels, which are clearly nocturnal in their habits. He says also that he has constantly taken chub with a white moth all through the early part of a summer's

night, but that the fish have suddenly ceased rising just two hours before dawn, and have remained quiescent until dawn had quite broken. Perhaps further light might be thrown on this topic by the careful observation of fish in tanks.

"Do Fish feel Pain?" is a question which must often suggest itself to the angler, and many must have often wished that they could unhesitatingly answer it in the negative. I think they may do so. Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, as learned a naturalist as he is an accomplished angler, in a pamphlet published a few years ago, amply demonstrated that fish do not feel pain, at least in the same manner, and certainly not anything like to the same degree, as warm-blooded land animals. A frog, which is a cold-blooded animal, evidently feels little or no pain, do what you will with him. You may open him, and inspect the action of his heart, and when released he will hop away apparently as happy as ever. You may vivisect him in almost any way you like, and he seems not a bit the worse for it than was the Jackdaw of Rheims for the shower of ecclesiastical curses. Fish certainly seem to feel no pain from hooks stuck in their mouths. Trout are often taken with artificial flies attached to them, and a jack, after being hooked and played and lost, will take a bait again the same day. I have had instances of both happen to me. In fishing Mr. Abel Smith's water, near Hertford, a few years ago, I lost a trout of about 2lbs. at one of the waterfalls, and I took him with my fly in his mouth about four hours afterwards; and a similar occurrence happened in the case of a jack of 4lbs., when I was fishing the water near Mr. Ward's mill, at Stanwell, Middlesex. It is all very pretty, but it is not true, that

"The poor beetle which we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance feels a pang
As great as when a giant dies."

The lower the animal organization the less sensibility to pain.

What may be the *mental* sensations of a fish when hooked and when being played, or when deposited in the well of a punt, is another matter. Of course, in a certain sense, it is "as bad to be killed as frightened to death," and doubtless, under the above-named conditions, a fish has a bad time of it; but I think an angler, if ever prosecuted by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, would escape conviction, on the ground that it cannot be shown that fish feel pain. But even supposing they do, and that their mental sensations are of a particularly unpleasant character when brought into contact with the angler, I shall cut the matter short by boldly saying that, in my opinion, the angler is quite justified in inflicting this cruelty (if it pleases any one so to term it) in the pursuit of sport. I hold that when man was given dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth, he had authority given him to utilize them in any and every way for his benefit, and not merely for the purposes of food. He utilizes certain animals for his benefit by employing them for draught purposes, though, of course, he could carry and drag his own burdens. In fact he utilizes them for his own comfort and pleasure. In like manner he utilizes other animals for his pleasure in the way of sport—in hunting, and shooting, and fishing. Field sports conduce to his pleasure, and even to his well-being, calculated as they are to develope the *mens sana in*

corpore sano, especially when his life is surrounded by many of the debilitating accessories of civilization, or for the most part spent in sedentary or mentally exhausting occupations. I hold, therefore, that the angler is justified in dealing with fish as he does, and that no fair charge of cruelty lies against him, unless he exercises *unnecessary* cruelty. Recently Lord Justice Kelly, in an appeal case in reference to cock "dubbing," laid it down that, "in his opinion, any act which caused an animal pain, and was not absolutely necessary for the future well-being of that animal, constituted cruelty within the meaning of the Act," i.e. Martin's Act, as it is called. If the learned Judge's definition and ruling is to stand, it may be well for a moment to contemplate the result. Of course, it would at once settle the vivisection question, i.e. unless the Vivisection Act overrules it; hunting, shooting, and fishing (presuming for a moment that fish feel pain) could at once be stopped by the prosecution of sportsmen; terriers' ears must be cropped no longer, or, more strictly speaking, no shorter; horses, mules, and donkeys must not be broken in for draught or saddle purposes or circuses; lambs' tails must not be cut; and so forth *ad infinitum,* because these pursuits and practices are "not absolutely necessary for the future welfare" of the animals affected by them. What may be the sensations of fish in dying a lingering death when taken from the water, of course we cannot tell. They certainly cannot be pleasant, and therefore the thoughtful angler, when he does not wish to preserve his fish alive for any particular purpose, will give them a tap on the top of the head directly on landing them. By the way, how strange it is that Mr. Freeman, who declaims so acridly against

hunting and shooting, has nothing to say against fishing! Perhaps it is one of the "sins he is inclined to."

And this leads me to make a remark or two on the Tenacity of Life in Fish. "What is life?" is a puzzling question in reference to all animals, but especially so as regards fish. Where does it reside—what is its seat in fish? "In the heart or in the head?" or where? This is a matter concerning which physiologists and ichthyologists have much to investigate. Here is one instance out of many which might be adduced of the tenacity of life in fish—in this case in perch. Last year I caught half a dozen of these fish at Maidenhead, ranging from ½ lb. to 2 lbs. On getting ashore in the evening my fisherman, following my directions, took them from the punt well, gave each one a sharp rap on the head, as is usual, with the thick handle of his well-net, scaled them from head to tail, cut them open from one end of the belly to the other, and thoroughly cleared them of their gills and every part of their viscera. They were then put in a fish-basket, which, when I got into the train at Taplow station, was placed in the netting above my head. When I was about half-way on my road back to London I heard and saw a movement in the basket. I opened it and found the perch *alive*, and one which I took in my hand struggled like a fish which had only been a short time out of the water. I made some remark about "muscular contraction," and closed the basket. When I got home, about two hours and a half after the fish had been *killed*, three of them were still alive—scaleless, gilless, bowelless! The section of an eel waltzing in a frying-pan hardly eclipses this. In a number of *Hardwicke's Science Gossip*, about twelve years ago, there was a

detailed account of the microscopical examination of the swimming bladders of some perch which had been dead fifteen hours. In the blood-vessels interlacing them the blood corpuscles were observed to be still in active circulation. Probably the chief seat of life in a fish is in the spinal cord. In connexion with the tenacity of life in fish is their power of preserving vitality under other "unfavourable" circumstances than those I have just mentioned. Sir John Franklin discovered fish perfectly frozen, but afterwards capable of resuscitation, a fact which has since been illustrated on many occasions. This peculiarity is, I believe, confined to cold-blooded animals; for they alone can preserve vitality for any lengthened period in a frozen condition. It was, however, but a few days ago that I read in the newspapers (and, of course, all we read in the papers must be true), an account of a man in Canada being frozen into a solid mass, and brought home for dead some three or four days afterwards. His coffin was made ready for him, but gradually the warmth of the domestic hearth thawed him, and he soon got up and went about his business. Fish in India and Ceylon live in the mud of the tanks, though the top becomes thoroughly baked and hardens after the water has been drawn off for many weeks, and the natives consequently do their angling with spades. Several of our own fish will live buried in mud for a considerable time, and probably some of them hybernate in this way for a longer or shorter period; but this is another point which requires further investigation.

But whatever be the principle or seat of life in fish, and whatever be their tenacity of life, certain it is that at last they go the way of all flesh, and like "golden lads and girls" and "chimney-sweepers come to dust," or some-

thing equivalent to it. And this is brought about by disease and the legitimate wiles of anglers and the illegitimate wiles of poachers. The Diseases of Fish offer too wide a field for me more than cursorily to allude to them here. Like the poor bull in Virgil's *Georgics*, they suffer many bodily ailments, though they "play no tricks" with their bodies, as we civilized men and women do. They are victims especially to internal and external parasites, the former afflicting them most. Of the internal parasites, nearly all those found in the intestines of fish are only in the first stage of their life-cycle, which is not fully developed until they have passed into the bodies of birds or quadrupeds, and in some cases into the human system itself. Dr. Cobbold, in the *Synopsis of the Distomidæ*, says that of the 344 species of "fluke" (or *trematoda*), no less than 126 are found in fish, and that this species of entozoa are "particularly plentiful in the stickleback, minnow, tench, perch, pope, trout, salmon, and still more abundant in pike, barbel, and bream." The *gyrodactylus elegans* attaches itself to the gills and fins of the last-named fish; *anguillulidæ*, of the order of *Hematoda*, or round worms, are found in nearly all fresh-water fish: the "thorn-headed" worms are the special bane of roach, and to be afflicted with *Echinorhynchidæ*, as roach and trout are, to the wasting of their poor bodies, sounds as terrible an affliction as *Elephantiasis* in the human being. The *Cestoda*, or tapeworm, is another most common parasite in the intestines of our fresh-water fish, and sometimes creatures of this species when measured are found as long as the fish from which they are taken. Then again there is *Ligala dignamma*, which afflicts many fish, especially barbel, and renders their blood nearly colour-

less, the fins pallid, and the eye abnormally yellow, while a malignant pustule often shows itself beneath the scales, which gradually drop off. Epidemics, too, of various types, from time to time break out among fish in different waters. Some years ago a disease appeared among the grayling in the river Itchen, and hundreds died, rising to the top of the water, as if poisoned by *cocculus indicus*. Last summer a kind of "scarlet fever" manifested itself among eels, at least so said the naturalists. For some weeks after the opening of the Westminster Aquarium many species of fresh-water fish were afflicted with a kind of fungoid growth over their whole bodies, and there was a great mortality among the denizens of the tanks. The hardness of the water had probably something to do with this, and it probably also is the cause of the same or a similar disease among fish in private aquaria. Fish thus affected may be successfully treated by a solution of bichloride of mercury, say 18 grs. to 6 oz. of water. Take the fish and first rub off the fungus with a brush or cloth or fingers, and then, with a camel's-hair brush, paint the affected parts of the body with the solution. All this can be done in a few seconds, and one application will generally be found sufficient. The water, however, of the aquarium should be changed daily for some time. It is hardly necessary to add that fish are very sensitive to the poisonous refuse of mines and chemical works, and sad havoc has been played in more than one river of late years by this abomination: and it is evident that the last Act of Parliament in reference to the Pollution of Rivers requires considerable amendment before it will efficiently protect fishfrom what is really most wanton destruction.

Fish are also very susceptible to magnetic influences

and violent concussions, which will frequently destroy them in large numbers. To one of these causes may probably be attributed the destruction of tons of fish on the shores of America in the spring of 1877, the outburst of a subterranean volcano, or subterranean earthquake, being a sufficient reason for the phenomenon. In the reign of Charles X., an explosion of gunpowder on the banks of the Seine destroyed quantities of fish for a long way up and down the river; and we know that rascally poachers in the north and other parts of the kingdom now employ dynamite in their nefarious pursuits, showing that a violent concussion of the water (and perhaps in some cases, compression) is "death to the fish." What will happen in the case of a great war in which torpedoes are freely used is something terrible to contemplate in connexion with the poor fish, and it is to be hoped, if only on their account, the Anti-Torpedo Society just established will get this instrument of war abolished from the "civilized" list of lawful "engines."

This is what Gilbert White, in his most pleasant *Natural History of Selborne*, says of the Death of Fish, "As soon as the creature sickens, the head sinks lower and lower, and it stands as it were on its head; till, getting weaker and losing all power, the tail turns over, and at last it floats on the surface of the water with its belly uppermost. The reason why fishes, when dead, swim in that manner, is very obvious: because when the body is no longer balanced by the fins of the belly, the broad muscular back preponderates by its own gravity, and turns the belly uppermost, as lighter, from its being a cavity, and because it contains the swimming-bladders, which contribute to render it buoyant."

There are other questions connected with the economy of fish hardly less interesting than those already mentioned. For instance, those connected with the Food and Digestive powers of Fish. It might seem that fish are able to live without taking any other food than that which they extract from the water which passes in at their mouths. A herring has, or seems to have, no food in its stomach whenever or wherever it is caught; and nothing but "a sort of yellow fluid" is ever found in the stomach of a salmon; while gold-fish will not only live for months, but increase visibly in size without having positive food given them. Probably fish are able to extract much more nutriment from the water and from the air in the water than at first might be thought possible; and there can be little doubt but that, like several cold-blooded creatures, snakes and frogs to wit, they can endure long periods of fasting. Still, as a matter of fact, they *do* eat; and that most voraciously at times, as any one may see by opening the miscellaneous larder of a jack, or an aldermanic trout when gorged with the tender may-fly; and though gold-fish will live very long without food, they most greedily devour crumbs of bread, and worms when given to them. That the digestion of fish is very quick is shown by the fact that solid food is reduced to a pulp very soon after being taken; and certain it is that the gastric juice is most powerful in many fish, particularly so in the jack, who can digest a gorge-hook with its lead within a few days; and it has been proved by experiment that eels, carp, bream, and other fish can digest food given to them in metal tubes. This is very strange; inasmuch as the general law seems to be that rapidity of digestion depends in a great measure upon the degree of

heat in any animal body; and the natural heat of fish is very low. Here, then, I will leave this point; and my readers will again notice that I leave it, as I have left others, without any special expression of my own opinion; my object being rather to show how many interesting questions there are in connexion with ichthyology, and the almost endless field of study it still offers us.

Several fish, I mean fish of the same species, exhibit a diversity and change of Colouring, dependent on the different seasons of the year, the depth of water in which they swim, the nature of the ground and vegetation about them, and the food they take; but how this diversity and change is brought about seems to be still a vexed question. Sea fish are subject to these variations, particularly haddock, sea-bream, whiting-pollack, soles, conger-eels, and cod; while the turbot has the power of darkening its spots, or perhaps better say its spots are darkened under the influence of fear. Among our own fresh-water fish trout are the most susceptible of these changes, and they will vary according to the depth of water and different conditions of the different parts of a lake in which they are taken. If one of two trout of the same colouring be placed in a vessel with yellow glaze inside, and the other in a vessel with brown or black glaze, the fish will quickly assume the hue of the respective vessels; but change them from one vessel into the other, and again they quickly adapt themselves in colour to their surroundings. The same phenomenon may be observed in the case of minnows, which change their hues in a bait-kettle according as its inside is of bright tin, or lined with a dark colour. Thus some fish seem to have "the perception of congruity, and put their coats in agreement with near

objects;" but whether this phenomenon arises from an action of will on the part of the fish, or is a kind of involuntary or unconscious sympathy dependent on some "law of colours," is still to be determined. It certainly seems a general, or at least a very prevalent, law of nature that wild animals, birds, beasts, and fish, more or less assimilate in colour with the surroundings of their special existence.

Can Fish Speak? (i. e. to one another): or have they any powers of "vocal utterance"? Æschylus calls fish, at least his chorus in the *Persæ* calls them, the "Voiceless daughters of the unpolluted one;" but many of the ancients and moderns testify to the utterances of fish. Pliny, Ovid, and others tell us of the *Scarus* and its wonderful powers of intonation. In the days of old Rome the Murænas were supposed to have a regular language "low, sweet, and fascinating;" and the Emperor Augustus pretended to understand their very words. I have read of the various sounds produced by gurnards, of the "booming" of the "bearded drum-fish," of the "noisy maigre," and of the "grunt-fish" of the Gulf of Mexico, which, though with an imperfect voice, "can express discontent and pain," and which, when touched with a knife, "fairly shrieks, and "when dying makes moans and sobs disagreeably human." Our English fresh-water fish are apparently dumb, with the exception of the "croaking trout" mentioned a page or two back, and I might, perhaps, add carp, which make a strange "sucking" noise when on hot summer days they put their noses out into the "upper air" from the beds of water-lilies or aquatic weeds, to take in an extra supply of oxygen, or "just for the fun of the thing." But of

course this is not "talking," nor is it really a "vocal utterance," still I am strongly impressed with the idea that fish can talk to one another, like other *dumb* animals, as the traditional Irishman might say, at least "in their way." I have watched for hours small fry in ponds and rivers, and fish of all sizes in aquaria, and the manner in which they dart up to one another, put noses together for a moment, and dart off again with an air as much as to say "all right," leads me to the conclusion that they can make communications to one another which I am satisfied to call "talking." It has certainly often struck me that fish make themselves understood to one another much more quickly than other *dumb* animals. Gilbert White, who of course "holds a brief for birds," says that "many of the winged tribes have various sounds and voices adapted to express their various passions, wants, and feelings, such as anger, fear, love, hatred, hunger, and the like;" and then adds quaintly, "No bird, like the fish kind, is *quite mute*, though some are rather silent. The language of birds is very ancient, and like other ancient modes of speech, very elliptical; little is said, but much is meant and understood." As I "hold a brief" for the fish, I maintain that this "quite mute" expression is a libel, and I am glad to see that White's Editor (in 1833) comes to the rescue, and instances on behalf of the vocal powers of fish, the "grunting" of the gurnard when taken from a hook, the "shrill cry like a mouse" of a herring just caught in a net, and the statement of a Mr. John Thompson of Hull, who said that some tench "croaked like a frog for a full half-hour" after he had got them in his basket. Of course I do not seriously argue that fish *talk* to one another. I must confess that

they are "rather silent," and that their language (whatever it be) is "very elliptical." But still, as I have said, I believe that they have the power of making intelligible communications to one another, mouth to mouth; and as I have frequently noticed, or fancied I did, a kind of "knowing look" about their eyes, I shall at least credit these intelligent creatures, as Thomson credited Celadon and his Amelia, with "looking unutterable things."

I must now bring this ichthyological "Note" to a conclusion; and as it has extended itself to a length beyond that which I had anticipated, I must perforce leave much unsaid which I should have wished to have said. To those who would dip deeper into the Natural History of Fish, I would first of all recommend Baron Cuvier's immortal work, while the two standard works on British Fish are those by Yarrell and J. Couch, a new edition of which latter I am glad to hear is about to be published by Messrs. Bell and Son. The more "familiar" histories of our fish are those by H. P. Gosse, F. Buck, and Frank Buckland, and that published by Cassell and Co. Jukes's *Manual of Geology* may also be consulted with advantage; and there is a little book by James Rennie, M.A., formerly Professor of Zoology at King's College, *The Alphabet of Scientific Angling*, full of curious and interesting ichthyological gossip. The edition I have is that published by Orr and Smith, Paternoster Row, 1836. Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell's *Angler-Naturalist* is also a book which will be read with pleasure by all who aspire to that title; but of all books on Fish and Fishing in which the ichthyological element is strong there is not one which has given me half the pleasure that Badham's *Ancient and Modern Fish Tattle* has.

Mr. John H. Keene, who comes of a well-known angling "stock," and has, I am glad to hear, started as a professional Thames fisherman at Wraysbury, is paying special attention to this subject, and as he is as good a fisherman as he is a naturalist, an angler who desires to know somewhat of ichthyology may spend a very pleasant and profitable day in his company. The result of many of his researches into the various diseases of fish, and of other ichthyological investigations, have from time to time appeared in the pages of several London journals. A connected treatise from his pen would find many readers.

But books and oral instructors are but poor teachers unless supplemented by personal observation. I would therefore advise all anglers who would also be naturalists to pay frequent visits to aquaria, and patiently watch the occupants of the tanks. Such visits will often suggest valuable hints on the art of angling itself. Most profitable and most interesting too is the study of fish casts and paintings and a thousand odds and ends of things piscatorial in Mr. Frank Buckland's Museum of Fish and Fish Culture at South Kensington. Most true is it, as Horace says in the trite quotation,—

> "Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus,"

which, being briefly translated, is "Seeing is better than hearing."

I trust I have said enough to show how interesting a study is ichthyology, and that the angler's pleasures would be considerably enhanced if he were only "a bit of" an ichthyologist; and once more to repeat myself, I hold

there is no more engaging study in the wide field of Zoology. So many and so various are the forms of fish in the mighty waters, so manifold are their structures and adaptations to the conditions of their existence, that the mind becomes almost lost in wonder and admiration. I care not for learned disquisitions as to the origin of the different types and species of the great tribe of fish, for "natural selection," and the "survival of the fittest," or the "gradual physical adaptation of an animal to its wants and desires" (by which I suppose the *Anabas Scandens* in the course of millions of years learnt to climb trees), nor for the subtle theories of the great triumvirate of modern science, Messrs. Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley. I am content to believe that "in the beginning" the great types and individual species of animal life "which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind" were the direct handiwork of the Great Creator, and to say, "How manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all."

NOTE II.

THE LITERATURE OF FISHING.

"*Of making many books there is no end.*"

"*Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.*"—BACON.

Antiquity of angling literature—The "Book of St. Albans," by Dame Juliana Berners (or Barnes)—Authors before Izaak Walton—Walton's contemporaries—Walton—Critics of Walton—Character of Walton—Proposed memorial to Walton—Other contemporaries of Walton—Authors after Walton to end of 18th century—Authors from 1800 to present time—Poetical literature of angling—Clergymen-authors on angling—General character of angling literature—Catalogues of angling literature—Books on angling recommended—Angling cannot be learnt from books—Want of an "Angler's Organ."

AMONG the ancients there is no one who can fairly claim to be called an author on angling, except Oppian, who wrote his *Halieutica*, five books in Greek on the nature of Fish and Fishing, some time in the latter half of the second century, a translation of which by Diaper and Jones (1722), is by no means bad reading. But the art of Fishing or Angling can claim the distinction of being one of the first subjects treated of in a printed book in this country, for within ten years of Caxton issuing from his press in Westminster (Westmestre) his first book printed in England, *Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophers* (1477), Wynken de Worde published the famous

book by Dame Juliana Berners, afterwards known as the *Booke of St. Albans*, in which the good and accomplished Prioress of Sopwell, near St. Alban's, discourses on "the dysporte of fysshyng." This book was first published in 1486 A.D., and contained "treatises" or chapters on hunting, hawking, horses, and coat-armour, and incorporated with them one on fishing, thus introduced,—"Here begynnyth the treatyse of fysshynge wyth an Angle." Whether Dame Juliana Berners was a lady angler herself does not appear, but that she held the art in high estimation and wished others equally to respect it is seen from the following paragraph appended to her discourse:—

"And for by cause that this present treatyse sholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle persone, whyche wolde desire it yf it were emprynted allone by itself, and put in a lytyll plaunflet; therfore I haue compylyd it in a greter volume of dyuerse bokys concernynge to gentyll and noble men. To the intent that the forsayd ydle persones whyche scholde haue but lytyll mesure in the sayd dysporte of fysshyng sholde not by this meane vtterly dystroye it."

On the last leaf of this book appears the device of Wynken de Worde, and on the reverse that of Caxton; but this leaf is wanting in the copy in the British Museum.

But the good Prioress herself, or some one with her consent, or without it, (for perhaps the law of copyright was as imperfect then as now,) a few years after the publication of her larger work republished the *Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* in a separate form, and after this several editions (eleven in all, as far as I can make out, and all in small 8vo) were published with the treatises on hawking, hunting, and fishing combined, "with all the

propertyes and medecynes that are necessary to be kepte."

The discourse of Juliana Berners is certainly quaint from our modern point of view, but her observations on tackle-making, baits, and angling generally, show that there existed in her time some considerable knowledge of the art, and perhaps that she herself was a proficient in it, or at least well able to cope with the *uneducated* fish of the period. She discusses also ichthyologically the various kinds of river fish, and their merits as food. She introduces her subject thus (taking the more modern English of later editions) :—

"Solomon in his parables saith that a good spirit maketh a flowering age, that is, a fair age and a long. And sith it is so: I ask this question, which be the means and the causes that induce a man into a merry spirit? Truly to my best discretion, it seemeth good disports and honest games in whom a man joyeth without any repentance after. Then followeth it that good disports and honest games be cause of man's fair age and long life. And therefore, now will I choose of four good disports and honest games, that is to wit: of hunting, hawking, fishing, and fowling."

She has no hesitation in saying, "The best to my simple discretion which is fishing, called angling with a rod and a hook;" and then she goes on to contrast these sports :—

"Hunting as to my intent is too laborious, for the hunter must always run and follow his hounds, travelling and sweating full sore; he bloweth till his lips blister; and when he weneth it be a hare, full oft it is a hedge-hog. Thus he chaseth and wots not what. He cometh home at even, rain-beaten, pricked, and his clothes torn, wet shod, all miry, some hound lost, some surbat. Such griefs and many other happeneth unto the hunter, which for displeasance of them that love it I dare not report. Thus truly me seemeth that this is not the best disport and game of the said four. The disport and game of

hawking is laborious and noisome also as me seemeth; for often the falconer loseth his hawks, as the hunter his hounds, then is his game and his disport gone; full often crieth he and whistleth till that he be right evil athirst. His hawk taketh a bow and list not once on him reward; when he would have her for to flee, then will she bathe; with misfeeding she shall have the fronce, the eye, the cray, and many other sicknesses that bring them to the souse. Thus by proof this is not the best game and disport of the said four. The disport and game of fowling me seemeth most simple, for in the winter season the fowler speedeth not, but in the most hardest and coldest weather; which is grievous; for when he would go to his gins he may not for cold. Many a gin and many a snare he maketh; yet sorrily doth he fare; at morn-tide in the dew he is wet shod unto his tail. Many other such I could tell, but dread of meagre maketh me for to leave. Thus me seemeth that hunting and hawking and also fowling be so laborious and grievous, that none of them may perform nor be very mean that induce a man to a merry spirit; which is cause of his long life according unto the said parable of Solomon."

I do not think my readers will be wearied if I continue this quaint passage, which thus proceeds:—

"Doubtless then followeth it that it must needs be the disport of fishing with an angle; for all other manner of fishing is also laborious and grievous: often making folks full wet and cold, which many times hath been seen cause of great infirmities. But the angler may have no cold nor no disease, but if he be causer himself. For he may not lose at the most but a line or a hook: of which he may have store plenty of his own making as this simple treatise shall teach him. So then his loss is not grievous, and other griefs may he not have, saving but if any fish break away after that he is taken on the hook, or else that he catch nought; which be not grievous. For if he fail of one he may not fail of another, if he doth as this treatise teacheth; but if there be nought in the water. And yet at the least he hath his wholesome walk and merry at his ease, a sweet air of the sweet savour of the mead flowers; that maketh him hungry. He heareth the melodious harmony of fowls. He seeth the young swans, herons, ducks, coots, and many other fowls with their broods; which me seemeth better than all the noise of hounds, the blast of horns, and the cry of fowls that hunters, falconers, and fowlers can make. And if the angler take

fish, surely there is no man merrier than he is in his spirit. Also whoso will use the game of angling, he must rise early, which thing is profitable to man in this wise, that is to wit, most to the heal of his soul. For it shall cause him to be holy, and to the heal of his body, for it shall cause him to be whole. Also to the increase of his goods, for it shall make him rich. As the old English proverb saith in this wise, whoso will rise early shall be holy, healthy, and zealous. Thus have I proved in my intent that the disport and game of angling is the very mean and cause that induceth a man into a merry spirit: which after the said parable of Solomon, and the said doctrine of physic, maketh a flowering age and a long. And therefore, to all you that be virtuous, gentle, and free-born I write and make this simple treatise, following by which ye may have the full craft of angling to disport you at your last, to the intent that your age may the more flower and the more longer to endure."

Our authoress concludes her treatise by giving all kinds of good advice. To rich anglers she says, "fish not in no poor man's water," and "break no man's gins." To all "break no man's hedges," and "open no man's gates, but that ye shut them again." Anglers are to "use this foresaid crafty disport for no covetousness," but for "solace," and health to both body and soul; not to take too many persons in their company, so that they may "not be let of their game," or prevented "serving God devoutly in saying affectuously their customable prayer;" and lastly, they are not to be "too ravenous in taking game," or "to take too much at one time," which they "might lightly do, if in every point they do as this present treatise showeth them." With a final injunction to anglers, that they "nourish the game," and "destroy all such things as be devourers of it," she assures them that "if they do after this rule they shall have the blessing of God and St. Peter."

The first edition of the *Booke of St. Albans* was re-

printed in fac-simile by Mr. Haselwood (London), 1819; and the separate *Treatyse of Fysshing wyth an Angle*, from this edition was reprinted by W. Pickering, in crown 8vo, with Baskerville's types, in 1827.

This, then, is the first contribution to the Literature of Fishing. But Dame Juliana, however much she may have stimulated the practice of angling itself, does not appear to have immediately stimulated angling authorship. It was not till 1590 that the first edition of Leonard Mascall's *Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line, and all other instruments thereunto belonging*, appeared. With the exception, however, of some remarks on the "preservation of fish in ponds," it does not contain much in the way of improvement on Juliana. William Gryndall's *Hawking, Hunting, Fowling, and Fishing, now newly collected by W. G. Faukener,"* was published in 1596 A.D. Samuel Gardiner, Doctor of Divinity, in his *Booke of Angling or Fishing*, which appeared in 1606, teaches us "by conference with Scriptures, the agreement betweene the Fisherman, Fishes, and Fishing of both natures, temporall and spirituall."

We now come to what may be called the Waltonian period. Barker's *Art of Angling, wherein are discovered many rare secrets very necessary to be known by all that delight in that recreation*, was first published in 1651, i. e. two years before the first edition of Walton's "Compleat Angler." The name of the book seems to have been changed into that of *Barker's Delight*, when it appeared in a second edition, with considerable additions, in 1657. Barker was evidently a quaint old fellow, and an enthusiastic angler. After the dedication of his volume to the Right Hon. Edward Lord Montague, he

writes of himself in the "Author's Epistle" (first edit.), as follows :—

"I am now grown old. . . . . I have written no more but my own experience and practice. . . . . If any noble or gentle angler, of what degree soever he be, have a mind to discourse of any of these wayes and experiments, I live in Henry the 7th's Gifts, the next door to the Gatehouse in Westm. My name is Barker, where I shall be ready, as long as please God, to satisfie them, and maintain my art, during life, which is not like to be long."

Both of Barker's books were reprinted by Burn (London) in 1820.

That Walton knew and thought highly of Barker's first book is seen from the following remark of Piscator on the Fourth Day :—"I will tell you freely, I find Mr. Thomas Barker, a gentleman that has spent much time and money in Angling, deal so judiciously and freely in a little book of his, Angling with a fly for Trout, that I will give you his directions without much variation." This occurs in the first edition; but in subsequent editions Walton altered his text to "directions as were lately given to me by an ingenious brother of the Angle, an honest man, and a most excellent fly-fisher," and as the list of flies then given is a verbatim copy of that given by Leonard Mascall, above mentioned, it would seem that he is the "excellent fly-fisher alluded to," though there is some little difficulty as to dates. In 1652, Gervase Markham, who had before then published several works on country pursuits and sports, issued his *Young Sportsman's Delight and Instructor in Angling*, &c., a book with which, doubtless, Walton was familiar, as he also may be presumed to have been with other Angling Literature existing at his time; though I cannot help remarking that in his "Dedicatory Epistle" to John

Offley (first edit.), he observes that he "could never yet see in English" a treatise on Angling "worthy the perusal" of "the unlearned angler."

And now we come to the great Izaak himself. From what has been already said it is clear that the title of "Father of Angling," so often applied to him, is hardly consistent with facts. He was neither the "Father of Angling," as an angler himself, or as an author.

"Vixerunt multi ante Agamemnona."

At least some *few* notables in both respects; and Walton himself acknowledges in the "Dedicatory Epistle" just quoted that "there be *now* many men of great wisdom, learning, and experience, which love and practise this Art." At the same time, however, I am behind no one in my admiration of, and veneration for, the famous old master in piscatorial Israel. As a man, a Christian, and a gentleman, his character shines forth as a bright star in the troublous times in which he lived; as an angler he was doubtless far before all of his own time, and all who had gone before him, though with his rude tackle and comparative want of knowledge as a naturalist, he could not compete for a moment with scores of modern anglers and zoologists; and as an author he produced a book which will ever live as one of the immortal classics of the English language. This is a trite theme; but how can any one essaying "Notes on Fish and Fishing" avoid it, or even wish to avoid it?

The first edition of his book was published in 1653 A.D. It was advertised by the "Enterprising Publisher," as books are now in the "daily papers." Thus the

announcement ran in *The Perfect Diurnall*: from Monday, May 9th, to Monday, May 16th, 1653:—

> "The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation, being a discourse of Fish and Fishing, not unworthy the perusal of most Anglers, of 18 pence price. Written by Iz. Wa. . . . . printed for Richard Marriot, to be sold at his shop in Saint Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet Street."

It was similarly advertised at the same time in the *Mercurius Politicus*. A fac-simile of this edition was produced in 1810; and I may mention for the benefit of some who are not aware of the fact, that another fac-simile of this first edition was published last year by Mr. Elliot Stock, of Paternoster Row, the very tint and texture of the antique paper being reproduced, with the small pages of fat type, with its long s's, while the art of photography revives the title-page, the quaint head-pieces, the illuminated initials, and the "cuts" of fish. Perfect copies of the original edition are now worth about 25*l.* to 30*l.* The second edition, which appeared in 1655, was almost re-written by the author, and in it a third interlocutor *Auceps*, was introduced. Little alteration was made in the third and fourth editions; but the fifth was much augmented, some of the variations being exceedingly curious, and to it was added the Second Part on Trout and Grayling Fishing, written at Walton's request by his friend, Charles Cotton, of Beresford. This edition is sometimes entitled *The Universal Angler*, and was the last published in Walton's lifetime, the date being 1676.

Not long ago, at a public sale, these five editions, the copies being perfect, in good preservation and handsomely bound, realized 100*l*. I may here remark that the word "Com*pleat*," which appears thus spelt on the illustrated title-page of the first edition, is spelt "Com*plete*" on all the pages of the book itself, the "Com*pleat*" being probably a little bit of pedantry on the part of the engraver of the "Dolphins."

The sixth edition, which did not appear till 1750, was edited by the Rev. Moses Browne, as was also the eighth in 1759, and the tenth in 1772. From these may be said to date something like a revival of Angling. In 1760 was published the well-known edition by Sir John Hawkins. The seventeenth edition is the next of any note, Sir Henry Ellis being the editor, in 1815. Other editions followed in quick succession, and in 1835 we have the notable edition by Sir Harris Nicolas, with the lives of Walton and Cotton, and illustrations by Stothard and Inskip. This has been since reprinted in more than one form, and in my opinion is the best of all, containing as it does in the notes the variations of all the early editions and much interesting matter. A special feature in this edition is the division of Walton's Dialogues into "Five Days," which thus brings out the "dramatic character" of the work. In Walton's first edition, though it is divided by the author into thirteen chapters, the dialogue evidently occupies five separate days, and "spaces" show where the conversation ends for the first four nights.

Altogether there have been about sixty editions of Walton, reckoning those published on the Continent and in America. The books which can boast such a multitude

of editions can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. I cannot, however, help thinking that this constant multiplication of the *Complete Angler* is quite unnecessary. It would be much more reasonable for the majority, at least, of those who feel inspired to write on angling to publish a book of their own, and not to take Walton as a mere text, for the purpose of correcting and overloading with notes. That reprints will be necessary from time to time may be taken for granted, for as far as one can judge, the *Complete Angler* is likely to remain a standard and popular work among English-speaking people as long as Shakespeare's *Plays*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, White's *Natural History of Selborne*, Keble's *Christian Year*, and, if the bathos of the transition be not too painful, Butter's *Spelling Book*, i. e. unless the London School Board, by effecting a reform in spelling, causes the last-named work to become obsolete.

The *Complete Angler* was well received by Walton's contemporaries, with the exception, it would seem, of one Richard Franck, who published his *Northern Memoirs* in 1694, (though written, he says, in 1658,) with which is incorporated *The Contemplative and Practical Angler, by way of Diversion*. This is in the form of a dialogue, in which "Arnoldus" thus speaks:—

"However Izaac Walton (late author of the *Compleat Angler*) has imposed upon the world this monthly novelty, which he understood not himself; but stuffs his books with morals from Dubravius and others, not giving us one precedent of his own practical experiments, except otherwise where he prefers the trencher before the trolling-rod; who lays the stress of his arguments upon other men's observations, wherewith he stuffs his indigested octavo; so brings himself under the angler's censure, and the common calamity of a plagiary, to be

pitied (poor man) for his loss of time, in scribbling and transcribing other men's notions. These are the drones that rob the hive, yet flatter the bees they bring them honey."

This is a hard hit; and it would appear that the author, who was also a practical angler and salmon fisherman, had on one occasion a personal argument on matters piscatorial with Walton. Sir Walter Scott, however, who, in 1821, published an edition of Franck with preface and notes, comes to Walton's rescue, though he credits Franck with practical angling knowledge. He says,—

"Probably no readers while they read the disparaging passages in which the venerable Izaac Walton is introduced, can forbear wishing that the good old man, who had so true an eye for Nature, so simple a taste for her most innocent pleasures, and withal, so sound a judgment, both concerning men and things, had made this northern tour instead of Franck; and had detailed in the beautiful simplicity of his Arcadian language, his observations on the scenery and manners of Scotland. Yet we must do our author the justice to state, that he is as much superior to the excellent patriarch Izaac Walton, in the mystery of fly-fishing, as inferior to him in taste, feeling, and common sense. Franck's contests with salmon are painted to the life, and his directions to the angler are generally given with great judgment."

Byron, who had seldom a good word for any one, had his fling at old Izaac, when he says,—

> "And angling, too, that solitary vice,
> Whatever Isaak Walton sings or says;
> The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
> Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it."

And even a modern author on angling, who must at least be given credit for the courage of his opinions, says of the *Complete Angler*,—

"I am free to confess I have derived neither pleasure nor profit. There is no doubt that in his day the worthy citizen was an excellent angler; he was also a simple-minded, kindly, prosy, and very vain old

gentlewoman. . . . . I would not whisper it at the "Walton's Head" or the "Walton's Arms," or hint it at the "Jolly Anglers," or the "Rest," or any other resort of his so-called disciples, but to my readers I will impart my private conviction, that there is now at least little practically to be learnt from Izaak Walton's *Complete Angler*, and that the reading of it is rather heavy work than otherwise."

I am also "free to confess" that the practical angler now-a-days cannot learn much of the art of fishing from Walton; but I will not admit that Walton was a "very vain old gentlewoman," or that the reading of the *Complete Angler* is "rather heavy work than otherwise." I dare to say that Shakespeare wrote no little twaddle, and made scores of jokes which would disgrace a modern schoolboy; but I hold it rank heresy to say that the *Complete Angler* is "prosy." There is such a thing as the deficiency of a reader being visited on the writer. Dr. Johnson, a pretty fair critic I suppose it will be admitted, but one whose name will ever be execrated by all anglers for his abominable observation about "a worm at one end of a line and a fool at the other," was one of the foremost admirers of the *Complete Angler;* and it was at his suggestion that the Rev. Moses Browne published his third edition of the Walton and Cotton (the 10th) in 1772. Another no mean judge of literary merit, Charles Lamb (and he too no lover of the angle) thus writes to Coleridge in October, 1796:—

"Among all your quaint readings did you ever light upon Walton's *Complete Angler?* I asked you the question once before; it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart; there are many choice old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianize every discordant, angry passion: pray make yourself acquainted with it."

The panegyrics showered down on Walton's book, after

the custom of ancient days, were for once well deserved, and are deserved even now in this more critical age. The *Complete Angler* is still one of the most perfect idylls, or pastorals, written in any age or country. It can never tire a sympathetic or even an unsympathetic reader.

> "Age cannot wither *it*, nor custom stale
> *Its* infinite variety."

It will ever be the true angler's *Vade Mecum*, though not in the literal sense it is to Mr. T. Westwood, the poet-angler, who thus sings its praises in his *Lay of the Lea* :—

> "Now in noontide heat
> Here I take my seat;
> Izaak's hook beguiles the time—of Izaak's book I say,
> Never dearer page
> Gladden'd youth or age,
> Never sweeter soul than his bless'd the merry May.
>
> For while I read,
> 'Tis as if, indeed,
> Peace and joy and gentle thoughts from each line were welling;
> As if earth and sky
> Took a tenderer dye,
> And as if within my heart fifty larks were trilling.
>
> Ne'er should angler stroll,
> Ledger, dap, or troll,
> Without Izaak in his pouch on the banks of Lea;—
> Ne'er with worm or fly
> Trap the finny fry
> Without loving thoughts of him, and—*Benedicite!*"

To the angler who has caught the spirit of his master, the "pastoral" Lea is still "sacred to his memory;" and even at this long distance of time he seems to be wandering in his very footsteps along the meadows and beneath the

trees and honeysuckle hedges where the old man and his friends walked and took sweet counsel together, admiring the wondrous and beautiful works of nature, and silently worshipping their Creator. Well has it been said that "Walton long ago made angling a medium for inculcating the most fervent piety and the purest morality;" and no one who has read his *Complete Angler*, his *Lives of English Divines*, and the memoirs of his life which have been handed down to us, especially that by Sir Harris Nicolas, can fail to see in him a man whom sweetness of nature, simplicity of manners, sound understanding, unswerving honesty, and religious integrity, combined with contentment and peace of mind, raised to a high standard of perfection in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

I am glad to hear that considerable progress has been made (though not so great as ought to have been the case) in raising subscriptions for erecting, in the parish church of Stafford, a stained glass window and marble bust to the memory of Izaac Walton. He was born in that town in 1593, and baptized in St. Mary's Church; and the poor of Stafford to this day receive benefit from his charitable bequests. A flat stone, with the inscription, I believe, almost obliterated, marks his resting-place in Winchester Cathedral; and all who reverence his memory would do well both to see this restored and join in raising the memorial at Stafford. Mr. John Shallcross, the ex-mayor, would, I am sure, be happy to receive subscriptions from the scattered "brethren of the angle" and all admirers of this good old man. I do hope that in this matter we shall not have to exclaim,—

"Shame upon the rich-left heirs
Who let their fathers be without a monument."

An angler and author contemporaneous with Walton, worthy of mention, was Colonel Robert Venables, who in 1662, i. e. during the period in which Walton brought out the several editions of his work, as already mentioned, published his *Experienced Angler; or Angling Improved, being a General Discourse of Angling*. This is fair reading, and has gone through six editions, the last dating 1825. Venables was known to Walton, and doubtless they often "compared notes" together. In *The Innocent Epicure, or Angling*, a poem published in 1697, the author of which is unknown, the line—

"Hail, great Triumvirate of Angling! Hail!"

refers to Walton, Cotton, and Venables. In 1675 the *Accomplisht Lady's Delight* contained "Secrets in the Art of Angling," but these were taken from Walton and Barker. William Gilbert was another author in Walton's time. He published his *Angler's Delight, containing the whole art of neat and clean Angling*, &c., in 1676, (the date of the fifth edition of the *Complete Angler*,) the work being dedicated to Sir Richard Fisher. He gives his readers "the method of fishing in Hackney Marshes, and the names of the best stands there," and bids them "go to Mother Gilbert's, at the Flower de Luce, at Clapton, near Hackney, and whilst you are drinking a pot of ale, bid the maid make you two or three pennyworth of ground bait and some paste (which they do very neatly and well)." From him too we learn that barbel frequented London Bridge in his time.

But as I have remarked in reference to the publication of Dame Juliana Berners' treatise that it gave no stimulus to angling authorship, so I note in reference to Walton's

Complete Angler (i. e. its several editions including the fifth), that it seems to have had the effect of making anglers rather shy of trying their hands at authorship; for during a period of a hundred years dating from the fifth edition of Walton, or, as I might put it, down to the end of the eighteenth century, but a very few works on angling of any value made their appearance, though Walton and Cotton during that period progressed to the fourteenth edition. As, however, I find myself, almost contrary to my original intention, involved in a *History of the English Literature of Fishing*, and writing it at a greater length and more systematically than I believe has yet been attempted, I may as well refer to some of the authors belonging to the period above named.

In 1681 appeared Chetham's *Angler's Vade Mecum—or a compendious yet full discourse of Angling.*" In 1682 Nobbes published his *Complete Troller*, and has since enjoyed the title of the "Father of Trolling," though not altogether deserved. In 1694 Richard Franck had his tilt against Walton, as aforesaid. In 1696 we have the *True Art of Angling*, by J. S., which reached its fifth edition in 1725; and in 1705 *Secrets of Angling*, by C. G. In 1706 Robert Howlett, "forty years a practitioner in this art," published his *Angling Improved and Methodically Digested.* In 1714 the *Whole Art of Fishing* boasted to be *a Collection and Improvement of all that has been written on the subject*, without being so. In 1717 and 1718 Giles Jacob discoursed, among other sporting matters, on Fish, Fishing, and Fishponds. In 1724 James Saunders published his *Compleat Fisherman*, which gives an account of "the diverse ways of Fishing now practised in Europe," and is the first book on angling

in which silk-worm gut is mentioned. The "*Gentleman Angler*" in 1726 contained "short plain instructions whereby the most ignorant beginner may, in a little time, become a perfect artist in Angling for Salmon, &c., &c.," (Oh, for the happy days when *Salmo Salar*, an uneducated beast, did *not* know "to a hair" or feather the orthodox lure to be artistically presented to him!) Brooks "wired in," mostly as a plagiarist, A.D. 1740; and in the same year *The Complete Fisher*, (with almost as many names at the back of the title recommending it as certain bills in Parliament recently have had of "Home Rulers" who tried to dodge the ballot,) taught the "*True Art of Angling*," and by the way gave the names of "places round London for Angling" which afford a curious study now that more than another century has been unreeled. In 1746, or about this date, we have the best book of the period on Angling, Richard Boulker's *Art of Angling, improved in all its parts, especially Fly-fishing.*" The Boulkers, who lived at Ludlow, were famous trout-fishers for generations. Charles published a second edition of his father's book in 1774, and since then it has seen several republications, the last being as recent as 1829.

The *Angler's Magazine* (Bibliophilists and others whom it may concern, please find out who G. S. at the end of the preface may be, or may have been, or more simply was!) boasting itself a "*Necessary and delightful Storehouse*," and "*the completest Manual ever published on the subject*," hands on the torch in 1754. Fairfax in 1758 keeps it burning with his "*Complete Sportsman, or Universal Angler;*" and after that, as far as I can make out, comes a complete lull, or nearly so, at least in the way of new

authors entering on the field till nearly the end of the century, when in 1784 John Kirby published his *Angler's Museum, or the whole art of Float and Fly.* I do not see this little but by no means uninteresting book mentioned in any of the "Catalogues." The edition I have is the third. In 1786 the *North Country Angler,* a very readable book, appeared, and in the year following, 1787, Mr. Thomas Best published his *Concise Treatise on the Art of Angling.* Since then it has reached at least the twelfth edition, for I see mine is of that issue and dated 1838. It is a fair little book enough; and that it is or rather was very popular is seen from the fact stated in the preface of the twelfth edition, that since its first publication upwards of twenty-five thousand had been sold. It must be remembered, however, that notwithstanding the literary barrenness of the period above mentioned several editions of what may be called the then "standard" authors were issued at intervals.

Here, though a little out of order, I cannot refrain from introducing as a "Curiosity of Angling Literature" an extract from a sermon preached by St. Anthony of Padua (251 to 356 A.D.) as given in *Addison's Travels.* When the heretics would not regard his preaching, he betook himself to the sea-shore, where the river Marecchia falls into the Adriatic, and there he called the fish together "in the name of God, that they might hear His Holy Word." They immediately appeared from sea and river in vast multitudes, and "quickly arrayed themselves according to their several species into a very beautiful congregation." At this miraculous display the good saint was so struck that he felt "a secret sweetness distilling upon his soul," and thus addressed the assembled shoals:—

"..... My dearly beloved fish .... The goodness of the Divine Majesty shines out on you more eminently than on any other created beings..... In you are seen the mighty mysteries of an infinite goodness. The holy Scripture has always made use of you as the types and shadows of some profound sacrament. Do you think that without a mystery, the first present that God Almighty made to man was of you? O ye fishes! do you think that without a mystery among all creatures and animals which were appointed for sacrifices, you only were excepted? O ye fishes! do you think that our Saviour Christ, that next to the Paschal Lamb, He took so much pleasure in the food of you? O you fishes! do you think it was mere chance, that when the Redeemer of the world was to pay a tribute to Cæsar, He thought fit to find it in the mouth of a fish? These are all of them so great mysteries and sacraments, that oblige you in a more particular manner to the praises of your Creator..... In what dreadful majesty, in what wonderful power, in what amazing providence did God Almighty distinguish you among all the species of creatures that perished in the universal Deluge! You only were insensible of the mischief that laid waste the whole world; all this, as I have already told you, ought to inspire you with gratitude and praise to the Divine Majesty that has done so great things for you, granted you such particular graces and privileges, and heaped upon you such distinguishing favours, and since all this you cannot employ your tongues with praises of your benefactor, and are not provided with words to express your gratitude; make at least some sign of reverence; bow yourselves at His name; give some show of gratitude; according to the best of your capacities express your thanks in the most becoming manner you are able, and be not unmindful of all the benefits that He has bestowed on you."

The legend tells us that no sooner had he done preaching than the fish "bowed down their heads with all the marks of profound humility and devotion, moving their bodies up and down with a kind of fondness, as approving what had been spoken by the blessed Father;" and adds that, after many heretics who were present at the miracle were converted by it, the saint gave his benediction to the fishes and dismissed them.

We now come to the opening of the present century. In 1800 we have Samuel Taylor's *Angling in all its Branches, reduced to a complete Science.* Daniel's *Rural Sports* appeared in two vols., and in three vols. in 1801. The *Kentish Angler,* which may still be consulted with profit, was published in 1804, and in the same year Neil's *Complete Angler.* The *Angler's Manual,* which treats of every kind of angling, and "particularly of the management of hand and rod in each method," has 1808 for its date; and Robert Salter, in 1811, published his *Modern Angler* in a series of letters to a friend. The *Angler's Guide,* by T. F. Salter (not to be confounded with Robert Salter), was first published in 1814, and may still be called a standard work, having reached nearly twelve editions. The *Young Angler's Guide* is an abridgment of this book. G. C. Bainbridge's *Fly-fisher's Guide,* illustrated by coloured plates of about forty of the most useful flies, accurately copied from nature, first appeared in 1816, and has run through several editions. The *Angler's Vade Mecum,* by W. Carroll, is dated 1818. In 1820 Salter's *Troller's Guide* made its appearance, and is still worth perusal. The year 1828 is marked by Sir Humphry Davy's *Salmonia,* reviewed in the *Quarterly* by (probably) Sir Walter Scott, and in *Blackwood* by Professor Wilson; a delightful work, in the form of conversations, and likely ever to remain as a chief favourite in the library of Angling Literature. Christopher North, also, in this year appears as an angling author, and an admirable one too, in *Blackwood's Magazine.* Jesse's *Gleanings in Natural History,* "with Maxims and Hints for an Angler," first published in 1832, is another book which will always find a place on the angler's shelves. The *Driffield Angler,* by Mackin-

tosh, has for its godparent an association called the "Driffield Anglers," formed by noblemen and gentlemen in 1833, for the preservation of the waters in that neighbourhood. Rennie's *Alphabet of Scientific Angling*, 1833, I have already mentioned, with a few words of commendation, in the last Note.

It might almost be said that, in 1835, we come to another era—the modern era—of Angling Literature, as in that year we have the first edition of Thomas Stoddart's *Art of Angling in Scotland*, which is still a very valuable little book to trout-fishers, though to some extent superseded by other and fuller works. Mr. Stoddart also published several other angling works, which anglers should never fail to obtain when they have an opportunity. In 1839 T. C. Hofland, author, artist, and fisherman, dedicated the first edition of his *British Angler's Manual* to Sir Francis Chantrey. This and subsequent editions are enriched with engravings and wood-cuts from pictures and drawings by the author himself and other artists; and I must confess that there are few books on my piscatorial shelves which I more thoroughly appreciate, written as it is in the spirit of a true angler and a true artist. South's *Fly-fisher's Text Book* was published in 1845. In 1846 appeared the first of several piscatorial discourses—all well worth reading—which have issued under the *nom de plume* of "Palmer Hackle, Esquire," and in 1847 Soltau's *Salmon and Trout Flies of Devon and Cornwall, &c.*, in which year also "Ephemera's" never-tiring pen produced the *Handbook of Angling*. In 1849 Alfred Ronalds made a hit with his *Fly-fisher's Entomology*. I believe I have given the date of the first edition correctly; but several have

appeared since then, that in my possession being the seventh (1868). No one who aims at being a scientific fly-fisherman or fly-maker should be ignorant of the contents of this book, the excellently executed plates giving, with some trifling inaccuracies, a coloured representation of the natural fly, and of that to be produced artificially. The book is a great authority, especially for what may be called Midland Counties' waters. In 1849, too, Wheatley published his *Rod and Line*, with plates of flies. Pulman's *Vade Mecum* (I am quite tired of Vade Mecums) *of Fly-fishing* is entered among the "Births" of 1851. Blacker, a first-rate angler and first-rate fishing-tackle-maker, but "gone over to the majority," published the *Art of Fly-making, &c.*, in (I believe) 1855. Let no fly-fisherman be without it, if he can get it. My edition, the second, of W. C. Stewart's *Practical Angler, or the Art of Trout-fishing*, is dated 1857; and this again is one of the books with which every fly-fisher should be acquainted. The title-page adds, "more particularly applied to *clear* water," and with an eye to this the book should be carefully studied. Here I remark, by the way, the strong tendency about this period for Angling Literature to be busied most with *fly*-fishing. About this time, or soon after, we have Blakey's *Angler's Guide*, and I am by no means disposed to run down this contribution to Angling Literature as some have done. I am inclined to hold the very charitable doctrine, that in matters piscatorial there is something or other to be learnt from almost every author. Wade's *Halcyon, or Rod-fishing, with Fly, Minnow, and Worm*, with eight coloured plates and 117 specimens of natural and artificial flies, was published in 1861, and in the year following Jackson's *Practical Fly-fisher, more*

particularly for Grayling or Umber, the second edition, I believe, coming out almost immediately after the first. A little book, published at South Molton, in Devonshire, in 1863, deserves special mention. It is, *The Art of Trout-fishing in Rapid Streams,* in reference mainly to North Devon. It is, however, applicable more or less to *rapid* streams everywhere, and though rather wordy and "repetitional," should be read by all who have the good fortune to get hold of a copy.

I am now getting near a still more modern period. I may call it the "modern" modern; and consequently, in mentioning authors, I should be getting on still more delicate ground than any I have yet trodden. I shall therefore content myself with saying, in reference to books on the Art of Angling, with all the necessary instructions both on fly-fishing (trout and salmon) and bottom-fishing, as well as trolling, that would-be anglers cannot do better, in the way of reading up a subject, than consult the various works of Mr. Francis Francis and Mr. H. Cholmondeley Pennell, gentlemen who have had a wide practical experience in almost all the waters of the United Kingdom, and in every kind of fishing. They are both too as well skilled in the use of the pen as the rod. I would also mention the little but excellent *Modern Angler,* by "Otter," (Mr. Alfred, of Moorgate Street). Among recent works of a pastoral and idyllic character, combined with that of angling proper, I know none for really pleasant reading to be compared to *Angling Idylls,* by G. C. Davies, and *Waterside Sketches,* by W. Senior ("Red Spinner"). Perhaps I should be well advised to mention in commendatory terms some other "modern" modern authors, as I know that more than one man of the angle is also a man of the

pen, as witnesses current literature; and it may chance that my "Notes" may be handed to such an one for criticism; and I have noticed that angling authors, though they are credited and credit themselves with the utmost amount of amiability, are particularly "rough" on their fellows, when they come into literary contact.

In the way of a very compendious guide to all waters within a "reasonable distance" of London, the angler cannot do better than consult *The Rail and the Rod,* by Greville F——, the well-known piscatorial contributor to *The Field,* and accomplished fisherman, who has issued two very useful volumes, in which he tells us almost all that an angler can wish to know of rivers, lakes, &c., to be reached by the Great Western, Great Eastern, Great Northern, South-Western, London and North-Western, and Midland Railways, combined with a mass of most interesting local information of a general character.

The Angler's Diary, published annually, is also a little work of reference to "Angling Stations" for the pocket, which may be profitably consulted.

But before concluding this part of my subject I must mention a work of a perfectly unique character, published last year by Mr. J. B. Day, of Savoy Street, Strand. It was edited by Mr. W. H. Aldam, at the request of many members of the Derwent Fly-fishing Club, and the text is a print from an old MS. never before published, written about a century ago by an old man well known as a first-rate fly-fisher in Derbyshire. It is a quaint treatise on *Flees and the Art of Artyfichall Flee Making,* and printed in rare old large type with spacious margin. But the unique feature of the publication is the introduction of thick cardboard leaves, containing in sunk pannels pattern flies and the materials

for making them. Each compartment has the pattern fly made in the best style, and accompanying it the feathers, hackle, silk hair and twist, each separately and securely fastened down, which are necessary for its exact manufacture. Altogether there are twenty-two flies thus given, all "killers" in the present day; and I would add that all interested in the art of fly-making should endeavour to get a glimpse of this book. The price, three guineas, is prohibitive to "poor" anglers, but it is well worth the money, if only as a work of art. I fear, however, that copies of the book are very scarce. I have never seen but one.

I shall now introduce a paragraph or two on the "Poetical Literature of Angling," preferring to deal with it separately than to mingle the authors connected with it with those who have confined their labours to prose. Among the ancients we learn that Numenius of Heraclea, Cæcius of Argos, Posidonius of Corinth, Leonides of Byzantium, Pancratias the Arcadian, and Seleucus of Tarsus were piscatory poets, but unfortunately their writings have been lost, and so we are reduced to Oppian, whose *Halieutics* I have referred to at the beginning of these remarks.

The first poem we have in English on Angling is that entitled, *The Secrets of Angling: Teaching the choicest Tooles, Baytes, and Seasons, for the taking of any Fish, in Pond or River:—practised and familiarly opened in three Bookes. By I. D., Esquire.* This was printed and published in London by Roger Jackson in 1613, and "Sould at his shop nere Fleete Streete Conduit." One of the very few copies of this book (i.e. the first edition) is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and on the title-page is a

wood-cut representing two men, one treading on a serpent, and with a sphere at the end of his line, while over his rod, on a label, is the inscription,—

"Hold, hooke and line,
Then all is mine;"

the other with a fish on his hook, and the following label:—

"Well fayre the pleasure
That brings such treasure."

There have from time to time been long discussions as to who I. D. was. Isaac Walton, in his "First Day," quotes six stanzas of the poem, and in his 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th editions ascribes it to "Jo. Da." In his 5th edition, however, he calls the author "Jo. Davors, Esq." Robert Howlett, in his *Angler's Sure Guide* (1706), attributes it to Dr. Donne, while several poets of the name of "Davies" have had the credit of it also. The question, however, has been set at rest by the discovery that in 1612 the book was "entered at Stationers' Hall" as "by John Dennys, Esquire," this gentleman being a younger son of Sir Walter Dennys of Pucklechurch, Gloucestershire, in the church of which parish the angler poet lies buried. The mistake as to the authorship may probably have arisen in some way from the circumstance that to the poem are prefixed some commendatory lines, signed "Jo. Daves."

The poem itself is certainly of a high class, containing much point, elevation of thought, and sweetness, and subtlety of rhythm, as well of subtlety of diction in handling what in itself may be considered a prosaic subject, when mere instructions in the art of angling are being attempted in verse. The quotation introduced by Walton begins with the well-known couplet,—

"Let me live harmlessly, and near the brink
Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling-place."

This he has slightly altered from the original, which stands thus:—

"O let me rather on the pleasant brinke
Of Tyne and Trent possesse some dwelling-place."

There are several other mere verbal alterations in the six stanzas quoted; but it is curious to notice that in the first stanza Walton has altered Dennys's—

"While they proud Thais' painted sheet embrace,
And with the fume of strong tobacco's smoke,
All quaffing round, are ready for to choke,"

into—

"While some men strive ill-gotten goods t' embrace,
And others spend their time in base excess
Of wine or worse, in war or wantonness."

But old Izaak, like the majority of "good" anglers, was fond of his pipe, and could not brook the implied libel on tobacco.

Dennys's concluding lines are worth quoting. They have a soft cadence about them:—

"And now we are arrived at the last,
In wish'd harbour where we mean to rest;
And make an end of this our journey past;
Here then in quiet roade I think it best
We strike our sailes and stedfast anchor cast,
For now the Sunne low setteth in the West."

In 1631 Fletcher's *Sicelides, a Piscatory, as it hath been acted in King's College,* was published; and the author again broke out in *Piscatorie Eclogs* two years afterwards, which Eclogs, (spelt *Eclogues,*) seem to have been edited in 1771 by Lord Woodhouslee. The *Innocent Epicure, or Art of Angling, a Poem,* sometimes attributed to N. Tate,

but probably the work of J. S., already mentioned as the author of the *True Art of Angling* (1696), appeared in 1697, but owing mainly to its artificiality cannot be compared to the poem of J. Dennys. The last piscatorial poet of the 17th century was John Whitney, who published in 1700 his *Genteel Recreation; or the Pleasures of Angling, a Poem, with a dialogue between Piscator and Corydon.*

In 1726 we have a translation of Sannazarius's *Piscatory Eclogues;* and to Moses Brown we are indebted for a further batch of *Piscatory Eclogues* in 1729. Ford's *Piscatio,* a poem originally written in Latin, appeared in 1733, after which date the piscatory poets seem to cease to sing till 1758, when *The Anglers, Eight Dialogues in Verse,* the work of Scott of Ipswich, did not contribute much to the exaltation of the theme, though not without a certain amount of cleverness and humour. *Eight Dialogues in Verse* in 1773 are no improvement on the last. Clifford's *Anglers, a Didactic poem,* in 1804, is but poor; nor in 1808 does T. F. S. give *Hints to Anglers* in verse so well as he does in prose a few years later in his *Angler's Guide,* already mentioned, if so be that T. F. S. is the T. F. Salter, gent., of Clapton, author of that work. An officer of the Royal Navy, T. W. Charleton, takes to fresh water in 1819, and gives us a poetical description of the *Art of Fishing.* The *Angler's Progress,* by H. Boaz, written, it is said, in 1789, and very scarce, was published in 1820. It professes to "develope the pleasures the angler receives from the dawn of the propensity in infancy till the period of his becoming a Complete Angler;" but though curious enough in its way, and very fairly illustrated for the time with twelve wood-cuts, the seven short pages comprise little more than a rhyme for

children. I notice in my copy an advertisement of *The Angler: a Poem in Ten Cantos with Notes, &c.*, by T. P. Lathy. This, it appears, was published in the same year, and is remarkable as being a cool dishing-up, without acknowledgment, of *The Anglers, Eight Dialogues in Verse* (1758), just mentioned. And the best, or rather the worst, of the joke was that Lathy got 30*l.* for his MS. from an "enterprising publisher," who spent a large sum in getting up the book in an expensive style before the swindle was discovered. When the fraud was ascertained "Piscator" was substituted for T. P. Lathy.

The *Newcastle Fishers' Garlands* are a series of Songs or Poems chiefly in praise of the *Coquet*, and emanated from the Waltonian Club established there about the year 1821-22. The custom seems to have been to publish a "Garland" annually, the first of which appeared in 1821 in form of a single-sheet broadside. It commences, "Auld nature now revivèd seems," and was the joint production of Robert Roxby and Thomas Doubleday, who were also the authors of most of the single "Garlands" to the year 1832, when the series terminated. They were published in a collected form in the year 1836, with Boaz's *Angler's Progress*, mentioned on the previous page, prefixed to them as the Garland for 1820. In 1842 an attempt was made to revive the series, but it failed after two or three years. However, in the year just named the original publishers of the "Garlands" brought out *A Collection of Right Merrie Garlands for North Country Anglers*, adding to the original a miscellaneous collection of songs, Doubleday again being a contributor. The best of the Roxby and Doubleday "Garlands" were republished in the *Coquetdale Fishing Songs* in 1852, and in 1864 Mr. Joseph

Crawhall again reproduced the *Collection of Right Merrie Garlands, &c.*, with songs and poems added mainly by himself and Doubleday, T. Westwood being also a contributor, and styled them by the old title of the *Newcastle Fishers' Garlands*, assigning one, and sometimes two, to each year to 1864 inclusive. Thus we have what the Devonshire folk would call "a Mixed Medley," and the Doubleday and Roxby strike some sympathetic cords, and Mr. Westwood is no mean poet. It may be a question whether the original or the "interpolated" Garlands have anything like sufficient merit in them to justify the pretentious form they have assumed in Mr. Crawhall's volume—and far less in a larger and more expensive edition, for which *only* two guineas were asked per copy.

In Professor Wilson's collected poems, published in 1825, will be found a very pretty piece, entitled "The Angler's Tent."

Mr. Blakey published his *Angler's Song Book* in 1855, containing nearly 250 songs of various degrees of merit, and some of no merit at all, scraps and snatches of all kinds and descriptions, ranging from John Dennys down to Wordsworth. The collection as a whole is not one of which anglers can feel very proud.

Several anonymous writers also in the current literature of the day during the last fifty years have with varied success contributed to the stock-in-trade of piscatory poetry.

Among our standard poets, though not strictly speaking piscatory poets, several have dwelt more or less on angling, and shown that they were admirers of the "gentle art" and its surroundings, if not actual professors of it. I shall not press Shakspeare into the service, though

a friend of mine is engaged on a discourse in which he will endeavour to show from his writings that "the immortal bard" was an angler, just as others have elaborated Shakspeare "as a divine," "as a lawyer," "as a physician," and as everything else. But Pope, Thomson, and Gay may certainly be claimed as having well sung the praises of "Fish and Fishing," or at least of having thrown a poetic halo round the Art of Angling.

Here I shall venture to insert, as a curiosity of the Poetical Literature of Angling, a "piscatorial puff" issued some years ago in the form of a handbill by a fishing-tackle-maker in Hungerford Market. It was headed *The Skeleton Angler*, and in the last edition revised by himself it thus runs :—

"When the old clock in yon grey tower
Proclaims the deep, still midnight hour,
And ominous birds are on the wing,
I rise from the realms of the bony king.
My bonny elm coffin I shoulder and take
To fish in the blood-red phantom lake,
Where many a brace of spectral trout
For ever frisk, dart, and frolic about;
Then the hyæna's ravening voice
Gladdens and makes my heart rejoice.
The glow-worm and the death's-head moth
Are killing baits on the crimson froth.
For work-bench I've the sculptured tomb,
Where tackle I form by the silent moon;
Of churchyard yew my rods I make;
Worms from the putrid corpse I take;
Lines I plait from the golden hair
Pluck'd from the head of a damsel fair;
Floats of the mournful cypress tree
I carve while night-winds whistle free;
My plummets are moulded of coffin-lead;
For paste I seize the parish bread;

The screech-owl's or raven's wing
For making flies are just the thing.
Should thunder roll, from the barren shore
I bob for eels in the crimson gore;
A human skull is my live-bait can;
My ground-bait the crumbling bones of man;
My lusty old coffin for punt I take
To angle by night in the phantom lake.
While Dante's wing'd demons are hovering o'er
The skeleton trout of the crimson gore,
To the blood-red phantom lake I go,
While vampyre-bats flit to and fro.

SCENE THE SECOND.—(*Sunrise.*)

The owl is at roost in his ivy'd bower,
The bat hangs up in the old church-tower,
The raven's head is beneath his wing,
The skeleton sleeps with the bony king,
The fierce hyæna has left the grave
To seek repose in his darksome cave.
The author of this piscatorial treat
Is the far-famed E. Davis, of King William Street;
Twenty-one is the number o'erlooking the Strand;
His prices are lowest of all in the land."

Before Mr. Davis moved into King William Street, in consequence of the demolition of that delightful old lounge for "fishy" people, Hungerford Market, the puff ended,—

"The author of this—take pencil and mark it—
Is the far-famed E. Davis, of Hungerford Market."

Mr. Davis now carries on his business in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and recently showed me some ghastly illustrations of the above lines, in which, if he will allow me to say so, he has evidenced, at least in my opinion, no little poetical imagination.

As a kind of cross between prose and poetry I may here mention Moule's *Heraldry of Fish, Notices of the*

Principal Families bearing Fish on their Arms. It was published in 1842, but is now seldom to be met with. In the course of my notes on different fish I shall mention several which have found their way into Heraldry.

I notice that clergymen are numerous among angling authors, as indeed might be expected of "fishers of men," who are also fishers of fish, and have a taste for handling the pen as well as the rod. The fox-hunting parson is almost a being of the past, though a celebrity or two still linger in the remote West, and the shooting parson is an object of suspicion in these correct times; but "a little quiet angling" is freely accorded on all sides "to the cloth." I have already mentioned Dr. Gardiner's book of 1606 A.D. The Rev. Phineas Fletcher, Rector of Hilgay, Norfolk, indulged in piscatory poetry a few years later. Robert Nobbes, the author of the *Complete Troller* in 1682, already alluded to, was Vicar of Apethorp and Wood Newton, in Northamptonshire. The Rev. Moses Browne was another "poet of the angle," 1729, and an editor of Walton and Cotton, 1750. Dr. Ford another poet in 1733. The Rev. Charles Marshall, Vicar of Brixworth, added *Hints on Fish and Fishponds* to his *Gardening* in 1796. In the Rev. W. B. Daniels' *Rural Sports*, first published in 1802, fishing occupies a considerable space: and as Scott (Dr.), the author of *The Anglers, Eight Dialogues in Verse* in 1758, was a "Dissenting minister," he also is a "Reverend," according to a recent legal decision. Among the moderns, to mention but one, the Rev. Henry Newland, late Vicar of St. Mary Church, Devon, one of the leaders of the High Church revival of the present century, and a devoted angler, has given us one of the most readable

books I know, *The Erne, its Legends and its Fly-fishing:* while also among the "Reverends" is Dr. Badham, the author of *Prose Halieutics, or Ancient and Modern Fish Tattle,* which contains vast stores of piscatorial as well as ichthyological chit-chat of the most interesting character. I might almost add that old Izaac Walton himself was more than half a divine.

I cannot say that I am altogether satisfied with the existing Literature of Fishing; I mean with that dating before (say) the last fifty years. Twaddle and repetition reign supreme in many of the older works, which are full too of all kinds of exaggerations and misstatements on matters of natural history. Of course we must not be too hard on old authors in reference to this last matter, as the light they had was but a feeble one, and their powers and means of observation were very limited.

Of what I may call the angling books of the "Middle Age" many are mere plagiarisms, and but few contribute in any very appreciable degree to the stock of angling knowledge.

As regards the poetical literature of angling, it would be mere affectation to say much in its praise. A vast quantity of it is mere doggerel, while affectation and "stiltiness" is another predominating feature. Old John Dennys is still far ahead of those who have sought inspiration from the Muses on this really poetic subject; and thus a field is still open for poets to win fame in singing the praises of angling.

I would, however, recommend anglers not only to read, but to buy any of the old and "Middle-age" books I have mentioned, and indeed any old and "Middle-age" books on angling, for, in the first place, there is a very great deal in

them to amuse, always *something* to instruct, and they will always fetch their money again, as there is a great demand for old and indeed all angling literature. If any one in search of old angling books expends a day in "drawing" second-hand book-shops and old stalls, he will be surprised at the scarcity of the literature he is in quest of.

I have already said all I care to say of modern authors. It is from these that young anglers will mainly learn all that can be learnt of angling, i. e. from *books*. Izaak Walton, in his "Epistle to the Reader" (second edition), thus cautions,—

"Now for the art of catching fish, that is to say how to make a man that was none to be an angler by a book; he that undertakes it shall undertake a harder task than Mr. Hales, that in a printed book, called *The Private School of Defence*, undertook to teach the art of fencing, and was laughed at for his labour. Not but that many useful things might be observed out of that book; but that the art was not to be taught by words; nor is the art of angling."

These remarks hold good now. Young anglers, and old ones too, who are not above learning, if they wish to become proficient in their art, would always do well to "take lessons" from experienced hands. For all kinds of bottom-fishing the professional Thames puntsmen and the Nottingham fishermen are good instructors, while learners must look further afield for tutors in fly-fishing for trout and salmon. But after all, few anglers, or would-be anglers, are so friendless but that they have some one who would take as much pleasure in teaching and illustrating the art by the water-side as they themselves would in learning it.

A word or two as to the illustrations and "cuts" of

fish in books on angling. I need hardly say that we must not look to the old books for any great excellence in this respect. The cuts in Walton's first edition are better perhaps than we might have expected, but the heads of all the fish are fearfully and wonderfully made, while their fins are painfully ragged and "jagged." The best illustrations I know of in any angling book are those in Hofland's *Angler's Manual*, almost all the wood-cuts being from pictures of fish painted by himself. Though a fish is very simple in outline, it is seldom that it "comes out" naturally on paper, and I have seen but few good coloured engravings. The attempts in this latter line in the *Fisherman's Magazine* (which perhaps I ought to have mentioned was published in monthly numbers during the years 1864 and 1865, and was a most interesting piscatorial journal), though no trouble or expense was spared to produce exact copies of nature, can hardly be considered a success even in the majority of instances; while an ambitious artist in Ronald's *Fly-fisher's Entomology* has given us a trout and grayling in which the vivid colouring has gone very far beyond that which the most brilliant of their tribe ever exhibited. Mr. Rolfe, of Nicholas Lane in the City, can paint a fish to nature, and has well earned for himself the title of "The Landseer of Fishes;" but we still need great improvement in the various arts applicable to the illustration of books on angling.

To those who would wish to make a longer excursus into the "Literature of Fishing," I would give the advice first, to procure some of the published Catalogues of books on angling. Of course the British Museum Catalogue is to be consulted. I notice in my edition of Boaz's *Angler's Progress* (1820), that there is an advertisement of

a work "preparing for the Press," entitled, *A Bibliographical List of all the books written either for the improvement in, or that are descriptive of, the Art of Angling.* I suppose this was published, but I have never seen it. As an Appendix to *Piscatorial Reminiscences,* a book of little value in itself, published in 1835, is a very interesting *Catalogue of Works on Angling,* "more extensive than any hitherto published," formed upon Sir Henry Ellis's corrected copy of the list which he contributed to the *British Bibliographer* in 1811. Mr. T. Westwood published his Catalogue in 1861, entitled, *A New Bibliotheca Piscatoria.* It is very scarce, and a new edition with *addenda* would be very welcome. Then, again, there is J. R. Smith's *Bibliographical Catalogue of English Writers on Angling and Ichthyology,* published in 1856. The most important of recent contributions in this direction is the *Bibliotheca Ichthyologia et Piscatoria,* by D. Mulder Rosgoed (Haarlem), the Librarian of the Rotterdam Library. It is a most comprehensive work, containing as it does separate catalogues of books in all languages, on Angling, Ichthyology, Pisciculture, Fisheries, and Legislation on Fisheries. Those interested in this subject would also do well to obtain, from time to time, the catalogues of Mr. W. Miller, of 6, Stanley Road, Kingsland. He has been known for upwards of fifty years in the trade as a dealer almost exclusively in books on angling. Not many years ago he published a catalogue announcing that he had for sale nearly 500 different volumes. The old gentleman is not only a Bibliopolist, but a Bibliophilist, and an angler of the old school, who can show many a record of his deeds in other days. I shall always entertain most pleasant

reminiscences of a visit I recently paid him, and of the couple of hours I spent in his little room, lined on all four sides, from floor to ceiling, with the "Literature of Fishing" and piscatorial curiosities.

There are in existence something like 600 books on angling, and as these are for the most part English, I have not thought it worth while to refer to foreign authors. But though in our own "Literature of Fishing," books of all kinds are so numerous, yet the cry is "still they come"—and Welcome!

My last remark is in the way of a suggestion. It is to the effect that though the *Field* and *Land and Water* (in the great ocean of which latter the *Fisherman's Magazine* "lost itself" at the close of the year 1865) and the *Country*, always contain much pleasant and instructive piscatorial reading, some Angler's Organ, more or less of an exclusive character, is wanted as a medium for communication between fishermen, and as current record of miscellaneous matters connected with Fish and Fishing.

NOTE.—Since the above was put into type *The Fishing Gazette*—a weekly—has made its appearance. As it has paid me the compliment of reprinting *verbatim* several long articles of mine, *without a word of acknowledgment of the source from which they were taken*, how can I do otherwise than wish it success?!

NOTE III.

FISHING AS A SPORT.

"Come, then, harmless Recreation,
Holding out the Angler's Reed;
Nurse of pleasing Contemplation,
By the stream thy wand'rings lead."

The Anglers.

"An honest sport that is without debate."—JOHN DENNYS.

Angling in England and other countries—Angling compared with hunting and shooting—Enthusiasm of anglers—Rationale of angling—Effect of field-sports on character—Character of anglers in Izaak Walton's time and afterwards—Modern anglers—London anglers—Metropolitan angling clubs—Angling contests—Anglers lovers of nature—"Devout" anglers—The virtues of anglers—Angling best recreation for "brain-workers"—Lady anglers.

IT may be taken for granted that centuries before Anthony and Cleopatra amused themselves with angling, fishing was regarded by many persons as a *sport*, and not only as a means of capturing certain of the *feræ naturæ* with an eye to the "pot." But in no country under the sun has fishing, as a sport, ever attained the popularity it enjoys at the present time in the British Isles. We are pre-eminently an angling nation, more so now than ever we were, for I estimate that, in proportion to the increase of population, the number of anglers has increased by five hundred to a thousand per cent. during the last quarter of a

century. There are anglers and angling clubs in Paris and its neighbourhood, and elsewhere in France. There are some hundreds of enthusiastic fishermen for small fry in Belgium, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, and even Spain; while in the United States the formation of angling societies, and the increasing interest taken in piscatorial matters, show that angling will, ere long, become one of the most popular pastimes on the other side of the "herring-pond." But we are still far ahead of all others in our love of angling as a sport, and are still the only veritable *pêcheurs à la ligne*. Inheriting a taste for the angle from our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, we have cultivated it till angling has become one of the most popular of our pastimes and recreations; and the peoples of other countries in this, as in many other matters of sport, are gradually following our example, and paying us the compliment of adopting the English methods of angling with float, spinning bait, and fly. An Englishman whipping a continental stream is now no longer in danger of being hauled before the local authorities on the charge of having "dealings with the devil," as was once a fellow-countrymen (if tradition speaks truly) at Heidelberg, because an alarmed populace were eye-witnesses to the fact that he caught fish in the Neckar "without baiting his hook," the crass "Fatherlanders" being innocent of the use of the artificial fly. In having thus become "a nation of anglers," we give evidence of our civilization, for angling for mere *sport's* sake is a mark of civilization, which several other pastimes can hardly be said to be; for instance, as Lacépède says, "Il y a cette difference entre la chasse et la pêche, que cette dernière convient aux peuples les plus civilisés."

So numerous a body have anglers become in this country of late years, that they no longer fear the jeers and scoffs which used to be levelled at their amusement; and the cynical are almost afraid to pretend to pity them. But even now there are some found who question whether there is any real sport in fishing as compared, for instance, with hunting and shooting. The simplest answer to such persons is the fact that thousands *do* find sport, and that too of the most exciting and pleasurable kind, in its pursuit. Because one person or another "can see nothing in it," and the pastime is capable of being described in a ludicrous manner, it does not follow that it is a poor sport. Some persons can see nothing in shooting, others in hunting; and certainly if any sport or pastime is capable of being turned into ridicule it is modern hunting, in which some twenty to thirty couple of savage hounds, accompanied by hundreds of horsemen, go forth to effect the capture of a poor little animal like the fox, or still more feeble and timid hare, when either might be easily shot, trapped, or snared? But the truth is that, to a great extent, it is unreasonable to compare one sport with another, for instance, hunting or shooting with fishing, with a view to special exaltation or depreciation. The whole thing is a question *de gustibus;* and furthermore, there is no reason why a man may not derive intense pleasure in the pursuit of all the three field sports most popular in this country. Indeed I know many men who are equally enthusiastic as to all these pastimes, and follow each with equal zeal and enjoyment, as time and opportunity give facilities for one or the other. Each has its features, and each supplies its votary for the time being with the amusement and enjoyment he

is in search of. The bold, impetuous rider is by no means disqualified from beating his turnips and stubbles as a plodding, careful shot; or a sportsman who is either the former or the latter, or both, from being a patient, "contemplative" angler.

Still, if I were asked, "Which of the three sports creates the most enthusiasm?" I should say at once angling; and, "Which yields the keenest sensation of pleasure?" I should undoubtedly give the same answer. The hooking, playing, and eventual landing of a big fish is *facile princeps* the most intense sporting excitement we are capable of. Our first partridge, our first brush (or even the first kiss "at love's beginning," as Campbell has it), are as nothing compared to our first salmon or our first big trout, while for ever afterwards a big bag, or "the run of the season," are not painted in the memory with such unfading colours as a memorable take of fish. The fact that a disappointment in losing a good fish is one of the greatest of sporting trials, makes success all the more pleasurable. In Foster's recent life of Swift we find that the Dean, in a letter to Pope, wrote thus: "I remember, when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line, which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropped in, and the disappointment vexes me to this very day." So intense are the emotions which fishing excites.

And as the angler is the most enthusiastic of sportsmen, so do none persevere with it so long. The well-known picture of the old gouty fisherman in his night-cap and dressing-gown, and one foot on a rest, indulging in his favourite sport in a tub which had been brought up to his bedroom, is but a little exaggeration of his *animus*. There is a good story told of an old courser on his death-

bed beckoning his eldest son to him, and whispering low in his ear, "Jack, always look for a hare on an *oat arish* directly after harvest." Here was the "ruling passion strong in death;" and for some time I looked on an old courser as more wedded to his sport than any other man; but I am now sure he cannot be compared with the old angler. The shooting-man and hunting-man come at last to contemplate their "last" season, and deliberately withdraw from their sport; but hardly ever so the angler; and herein consists a special advantage in angling, for in some form or other it may be pursued as an amusement to the very end of life. If Cicero were writing now *De Senectute*, he would certainly mention angling as among the pleasures and privileges of old age.

I have already quoted in my second Note a passage from Dame Juliana Berners, in which the worthy prioress upholds fishing as the best of sports. I cannot resist quoting one from old Burton, who, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, I have a shrewd idea, is a much greater plagiarist than is generally supposed. He says (evidently with the passage from the Book of St. Alban's in his mind, and perhaps eye),—

"'Fishing is a kinde of hunting by water, be it with nets, weeles, baits, angling, or otherwise, and yields all out as much pleasure to some men, as dogs, or hawks, when they draw their fish upon the bank,' saith Nic. Henselius, *Silesiographiæ*, cap. 3, speaking of that extraordinary delight his countrymen took in fishing and making of pooles. James Dubravius, that Moravian, in his book *De Pisc.*, telleth, how travelling by the highway-side in Silesia, he found a nobleman booted up to the groins, wading himself, pulling the nets, and labouring as much as any fisherman of them all: and when some belike objected to him the baseness of his office, he excused himself, that if other men might hunt hares, why should not he hunt carpes? Many gentlemen in like sort, with us, will wade up to the armholes,

upon such occasions, and voluntarily undertake that to satisfie their pleasure, which a poor man for a good stipend would scarce be hired to undergo. Plutarch, in his book *De Soler. Animal.*, speaks against all fishing, as a filthy, base, illiberall imployment, having neither wit nor perspicacity in it, nor worth the labour. But he that shall consider the variety of baits, for all seasons, and pretty devices which our anglers have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, severall sleights, &c., will say, that it deserves like commendation, requires as much study and perspicacity as the rest, and is to be preferred before many of them; because hawking and hunting are very laborious, much riding, and many dangers accompany them; but this is still and quiet; and if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk to the brook side, pleasant shade, by the sweet silver streams; he hath good air, and sweet smels of fine fresh meadow flowers; he hears the melodious harmony of birds; he sees the swans, herns, ducks, water hens, cootes, &c., and many other fowle with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds, or blast of horns, and all the sport that they can make."

Man has an innate desire to capture alive or dead the *ferœ naturæ*. The chief source, however, of the pleasure of success in sport among *civilized* men is the consciousness that human skill and perseverance has proved superior to the instinct and various powers of the animal. Even the untutored savage has some idea of hunting as a *sport*, apart from its being a means of subsistence, and his pleasurable anticipation of the "happy hunting-grounds" consists, I take it, in the assurance that he will not only always have wherewithal to satisfy his hunger, but that his time will be always delightfully employed. A child catches flies, not, I think, from any innate cruelty, but from an instinct of sport. The fact that success in angling is mainly the result of skill, should give it high rank among our field pastimes.

A great deal of nonsense has been written as to the brutalizing effects of field-sports. Doubtless some years

ago many sportsmen were brutal, as indeed some are now; but these were the product of a brutal age, and were not made brutal by their sports. However much we may smile at the expression "sweetness and light," there is certainly a great deal more of these commodities now than there was fifty or even twenty-five years ago. "Squire Western" is now an anachronism. Many of the most refined scholars, earnest philanthropists, and cultured gentlemen among us are sportsmen in some line or other, not a few in that of angling.

It may be true, as Sydney Smith said, that an English country gentleman was assailed directly after breakfast with a desire to "go out and kill something;" and it may be admitted he is still so assailed; but the *spirit* in which he "kills" is a sufficient defence, if any were needed, of the "desire."

We know the kind of man Walton was, and we learn from him the kind of men his contemporaries were, who belonged to the "gentle" army of anglers. There was William Perkins, "a learned divine, and a pious and *painful* preacher," of whom Walton says that he "bestowed *commendation* on angling." I notice, by the way, that of Perkins, Sir John Hawkins, in a note to his edition of Walton (1760), remarks that he had lost the use of his right hand, and that therefore Walton used "extreme caution" in speaking of him as he could "hardly be supposed capable of baiting his hook." It is possible that this was the case; but I may mention that John Keene, one of the Staines professional fishermen, has long been without one of his arms, and yet, of my personal experience, can shove a punt, fix his ripecks, put a worm or other bait on a hook in the most artistic manner, fish

in every style, and make tackle with his solitary hand. Then again there was Dr. Whitaker, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, "a dear lover and great practiser," as Walton says, of angling. Another historical angler of Walton's time was Dr. Alexander Nowel, spoken of by Walton as a man "noted for his meek spirit, deep learning, prudence, and piety," and as "a dear lover and constant practiser of angling as any age can produce." What further Walton says of him is worth quoting in his own words:—

"His custom was to spend besides his fixed hours of prayer, those hours which, by command of the Church, were enjoined the clergy, and voluntarily dedicated to devotion by many primitive Christians, I say, besides those hours, this good man was observed to spend a tenth part of his time in Angling; and, also, for I have conversed with those which have conversed with him, to bestow a tenth part of his revenue, and usually all his fish, amongst the poor that inhabited near to those rivers in which it was caught, saying often, 'that charity gave life to religion:' and at his return to his house, would praise God he had spent that day free from worldly trouble; both harmlessly and in recreation that became a Churchman. And this good man was well content, if not desirous, that posterity should know he was an Angler; as may appear by his picture, now to be seen and carefully kept, in Brazen-nose College, to which he was a liberal benefactor. In which picture he is drawn leaning on a desk, with his Bible before him; and on one hand of him, his lines, hooks, and other tackling, lying in a round; and on his other hand are his Angle-rods of several sorts; and by them this is written, 'that he died 13 Feb., 1601, being aged ninety-five years, forty-four of which he had been Dean of St. Paul's Church; and that his age neither impaired his hearing, nor dimmed his eyes, nor weakened his memory, nor made any of the faculties of his mind weak or useless.' It is said that Angling and temperance were great causes of these blessings; and I wish the like to all that imitate him, and love the memory of so good a man."

By the way, the remark of Walton that Dean Nowel "made that good, plain, unperplexed Catechism which is

printed with our good old service-book," is not correct. Nowel drew up two admirable catechisms, the "greater" and the "less," which were allowed and received by the Church in the reign of Elizabeth, and of one of which Whitgift says, "I know no man so well learned, but it may become him to read and study that learned and necessary book." But the Catechism as it now stands in the Prayer Book was not the work of the old and reverend angler.

Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton College, was another of Walton's contemporaries, and an intimate friend; an ardent fisherman, who discoursed well in prose and verse on the art. Thus again Walton of this worthy,—

"This man, whose very approbation of Angling were sufficient to convince any modest censurer of it, this man was also, a most dear lover, and a frequent practiser of the art of Angling; of which he would say, 'it was an employment for his idle time, which was then not idly spent;' for Angling was, after tedious study, 'a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness; and that it begat habits of peace and patience in those that professed and practised it.' Indeed, my friend, you will find Angling to be like the virtue of humility, which has a calmness of spirit, and a world of other blessings attending upon it."

Long after he was seventy years of age did Wotton "sit quietly on a summer's evening, on a bank a-fishing," and sang the praises of the angle.

Then again there was Dr. Sheldon, Warden of All Souls' College, Oxford, the founder of the Sheldonian Theatre, and Archbishop of Canterbury, whom Walton speaks of as a noted fisher for umber and barbel. "His skill," he says, "is above others, and of that the poor that dwell about him have a comfortable experience."

Dr. Leigh, who was Master of Balliol College, Oxford, Sir John Hawkins informs us, made angling "the recreation of his vacant hours," though "turned of ninety." He died in 1790.

I might have gone back farther, and mentioned other anglers of more ancient days, like Anthony and Cleopatra. The Emperor Augustus was an angler, and so was Caracalla, whose exploits in the "Virginia Water of the Cæsars" Oppian has happily chronicled.

We gather, too, from some scurrilous verses by the witty and venomous Lord Rochester, beginning

> "Methinks I see our mighty Monarch stand,
> His pliant angle trembling in his hand,"

that our Charles the Second was one of the fraternity.

More lately among those of notable anglers we have the names of Sir Humphry Davy, Archdeacon Paley, Sir F. Chantrey, Brinsley Sheridan, Sir Anthony Carlisle, Professor Wilson, and Sir John Soane, all men of eminence.

Modern anglers are of course a very miscellaneous class, ranging from the highest to the lowest in the land. The "Upper Ten" and the "Plutocracy" supply most of the salmon fishers, for salmon-fishing is an expensive amusement—

> "Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum."

There are men who give up their lives to salmon fishing, and go almost all over the world for it, spending fortunes in the pursuit. They have cast a fly on almost every river in the three kingdoms, and know every inch of the famous Scotch waters almost as well as Mr. Watson Lyall, the proprietor and editor of the *Sportsman's*

Guide to Scotland, and himself one of the most accomplished fishermen north of the Tweed. The Norway waters are familiar to them; they have landed monsters from the salmon-haunted rivers of Eastern and Western America, and by way of a new sensation now betake themselves to the bright waters flowing from the Himalayas, to struggle with the gigantic and plucky Mahseer. Among the more humble fishermen are all sorts and conditions of men; the comely gentleman, the professional man, the artist, the lawyer, the physician, the divine, the "city man," the artisan. I know among the most devoted of anglers a celebrated modern artist, one of the most eminent surgeons of the day, a distinguished "Officer of Health," an eminent East-end undertaker, a scientific master sweep, and a most learned examiner for the Civil Service whose greatest delight after "marking papers" is to get away to the banks of a trout stream. Not a few modern statesmen have been votaries of the rod and line, among whom I may mention M. de Salvandy, a member of the Cabinet in the reign of Louis Philippe, who would day after day escape from his official residence at the Ministry of Public Instruction to indulge in his favourite sport of gudgeon-fishing at a well-known spot under the Ponte de la Concorde. I cannot indeed understand from his character how Mr. John Bright is one of the most enthusiastic anglers of the day, any more than I can imagine that Mr. Gladstone is likely to become one; but the fact remains that the honourable member for Birmingham is one of the fraternity. Daniel Webster, President of the United States, was an angler to the backbone, as his *Angler's Tour*, a fine piece of literary composition, bears

witness; and Charles Kingsley masterfully wielded the rod.

The still progressing popularity of fishing, to which I have already alluded, may be gathered from the wonderful increase in late years of Angling Societies in the metropolis alone. Mr. R. Ghurney, the Secretary of the "Hoxton Brothers" and of the Central Committee of the "United London Anglers," has most kindly furnished me with some information on this point, from which I gather that there are at the present time about eighty Angling Clubs or Societies in the metropolitan districts, fifty-three of which are associated together under the name of the "United London Anglers," and pay social visits in rotation to the "Head Centre." The fifty-three clubs have in round numbers 1700 members, and the other clubs 500, the very great majority of whom are small shopkeepers, mechanics, and "working" men. Of the same class there are at least 1000 *regular* anglers in the London districts who belong to no clubs. Further it may be calculated that there are 500 more *regular* anglers who reside in the vicinity of the Thames, the Lea, and other waters, say within twenty miles of London. To these also may be added 1000 at least of *regular* anglers, of the "upper" classes, gentlemen, merchants, and "large" shopkeepers. These added together will give us, in round numbers, a grand total of 5000 persons who make angling their chief recreation in a moderately circumscribed area of which London is the centre.

The Metropolitan Angling Clubs are a great feature in the annals of modern fishing. But a few years ago they might have been counted on the fingers of the two hands, but now, as I have said, they have increased and multi-

plied wonderfully. They hold their meetings, weekly or bi-weekly, in the season, at some congenial hostelry, the landlord of which is generally one of the fraternity. These names are "fanciful" but significative of their craft or indicative of the good fellowship which reigns supreme among anglers. Thus we have the "Friendly Anglers," the "Amicable Waltonians," the "Brothers-well-met," the "Golden Barbel," the "Sir Hugh Myddelton," the "Convivial," the "Nil Desperandum," the "Isaak Walton," the "Silver Trout," the "Walton and Cotton," the "Hoxton Brothers," and "Brothers" and "Anglers" innumerable with an agnomen signifying their particular district. Their club-rooms are decorated with preserved fish, many splendid cases of which they exhibited at the Piscatorial Exhibition at the Westminster Aquarium in 1877, and various piscatorial trophies. At their meetings they "show" and "weigh in" their captures, and prizes are given for the "takes." It would be more easy almost to enumerate what these prizes are not than what they are, as they range from a set of dining-tables down to a silver thimble, and like Achilles, the least fortunate member values his prize, though it be "but a little one." Watches, teapots, lustres, purses, cigar-cases, *et hoc genus omne*, not forgetting fishing-boots, waterproof-coats, and fishing-tackle, serve as testimonials to skill and luck; while coals are also at Christmas time among the rewards of merit, and even a lively young porker and a half-grown donkey have figured among the honoraria.

The establishment of these clubs in London, and in the provinces, where they flourish equally well, has given rise of late years to Angling contests, by which, of course, the "enterprising landlord" of the —— Arms, who

generally gets them up and provides the prizes, contrives to lose nothing by his enterprise. The intense interest these contests excite, and the number of competitors who join in them, must be astonishing to those who are not acquainted with this modern feature of Angling. Not very long ago in the "North Midlands," a liberal host offered six prizes ranging from 24*l.* to 4*l.* to be fished for, and his friends provided 170 "additional" ones. The competitors, who had to pay 3*s.* 6*d.* entrance each, numbered no less than 500, and they were stationed at twelve yards apart, the line thus occupying a distance along the waterside of three miles and a half. The day being a suitable one for fishing, the aggregate of fish taken was very large, the winner of the first prize scoring 19 lbs. 1½ oz. "The arrangement was most complete," says the historian, "and everything passed off most satisfactorily"—a fact to be noted, as showing consummate generalship on the part of the managers, and an exceeding amount of good fellowship and "charity" on the part of the contestant anglers. Still more recently on the Lea, 276 anglers entered for a great roach match, and the day being unfavourable, the winner got the first prize of 40*l.* with 13½ oz. of fish, which on that particular day were thus worth almost their weight in gold. Matches also between two anglers are now of common occurrence, and these often for very large sums. I remember not long ago seeing a challenge from one first-rate hand to another, to a contest of skill for 100*l.* a side. Whether these contests conduce to the good of "the craft" is another question; they certainly show the keenness with which angling is now pursued. That betting should take place on these occasions is only what might be expected, as

Englishmen will bet on everything "bettable," such as the settling of flies on lumps of sugar, commonly known as "Fly Loo;" the trickling of heavy raindrops down a window pane, and the racing powers of gentles on a mahogany table.

But to return for a moment to our London anglers. I think it a matter for congratulation that so many hundreds of genuine working men, from the shop-tied masters and men down to the literally "horny-handed sons of toil," take such intense pleasure in the innocent and healthful recreation of angling; and I am glad that the Railway Companies, by the issue of "Angling tickets," at reduced fares (under the management of the Central Committee of Anglers), grant facilities of sport to those to whom the saving of a shilling is an object. I most cordially sympathize with the sentiment of the angler's song, called the *Invitation*, which thus runs :—

"Oh, while fishing lasts enjoy it,
Let us to the streams repair;
Snatch some hours from toil and study,
Nature's blessed gifts to share.
Ye who stand behind the counter,
Or groan pallid at the loom,
Leave the measure and the shuttle,
To the rippling stream come, come!

"He that clothed their banks with verdure,
Dotted them with various flowers;
Meant that ye, though doom'd to labour,
Should enjoy some cheering hours;
Wipe your reeking brows, come with us
With your basket and your rod;
And with happy hearts look up from
Nature unto Nature's God."

I have a great respect for the London angler, though

he is a roughish customer sometimes to look at. He means business, with his fishing-box padded on the top for a seat, his bundle of rods, and other well-selected paraphernalia and impedimenta; and he does it, if the Fish and the Fates are at all propitious. After his kind the London angler is a true sportsman.

One of the great charms of angling is, that of all sports it affords the best opportunities of enjoying the wonders and beauties of Nature; while, at the same time, it developes a love of nature, and creates a taste for the study of various celestial and terrestrial phenomena. This sentence may sound like an introduction to a heavy essay, the writer of which is in duty bound to elaborate his theme to the utmost, and not unlikely to indulge in exaggeration. I shall endeavour to avoid these errors; but I must speak as I feel, and as an enthusiastic angler, and I might say a believer in angling and its virtues, I do not hesitate to "magnify my office."

Whatever be the season of the year, whether the angler be casting his fly on the early rivers of Devonshire, mid the cold winds and storms of February and March, or later on beneath the more genial skies of April and May, or basking in the summer's sun on the bosom of the Thames, as he is lazily indifferent whether his line tempt the fish or not, or pursuing his pastime during the soft autumn days, or the chill and short daylight hours of winter; whether he be strolling along the margin of the swift-rushing streams of Wales and Scotland, with mountain and moorland round him, or of the more gently flowing rivers of the South which meander through the rich water-meadows, curtained by hanging woods, or angling patiently on lonely loch or by side of sedgy pool,

he has his eyes and ears open for the sights and sounds of nature, as she presents herself to him in her various moods and phases. I do not, of course, mean that all anglers are keen lovers of nature or observant of natural phenomena; but the great majority certainly are so, and become more and more interested every year in all they see and hear about their paths. He spake truly in the "Old Play:"—

> "Trust me, there is much 'vantage in it, sir;
> You do forget the noisy pother of mankind,
> And win communion with sweet Nature's self,
> In plying our dear craft."

And so not unfrequently, nay, it very often happens that the angler is led to investigate the habits of the birds, beasts, and insects which present themselves to him in his vocation, and the marvels of the lives of the innumerable creatures which tenant the earth, air, and water; and thus he becomes an enthusiastic, though, of course, not always a scientific naturalist; while the trees of the forest and the flowers of the field are another endless source of interest and study.

It is in this respect that fishing as a sport has a great advantage over both hunting and shooting. These in their very nature so engross the sportsman's attention, that he cannot suffer his mind to be diverted from the immediate pursuit of the sport in hand. Of course, he has what may be called leisure moments in both, but he cannot at *any* moment suspend, as it were, his operations, whatever be his love of nature and natural history. It is otherwise with the angler: he can lay aside his rod for any interval he likes, whenever his attention is called to some interesting object or phenomenon, and can even

pursue his sport and observations together. This is, as I have said, one of the great charms of the fisherman's sport; and which makes it, *par excellence*, "The Contemplative Man's Recreation." I can well understand the earnest ejaculation of a well-known writer and sportsman still among us, when he says,—

> "You may shoot, you may hunt, you may stalk the red deer,
> Let *me* list to the music of some falling weir."

Yes—"The Recreation" of a "Contemplative Man," in the highest sense of the word: for I will venture to say that anglers, as a rule, are "devout," if not strictly speaking, "religious men." It has been well said, that "an indevout philosopher is mad." I would almost say the same of an "indevout" angler. The devout tone of angling literature, from its beginning to the present day, is very marked. Isaak Walton's book may almost be called a religious work, so replete is it with religious thoughts which had their origin in the contemplation of the wonders and beauties of nature. I do not mean, of course, that fishing on the banks of the Lea or Dove or quiet Staffordshire streams, made Walton a religious man. He was, and would have been *that*, without his love of angling and of nature. But, doubtless, his angling rambles increased his love of nature, and his love of nature his love of its Creator. Here is one passage, a well-known one out of scores, which illustrates his frame of mind, and his constant contemplation of nature as (to use the striking expression of Chaucer) "The Vicar of the Almightie Lord:"—

"Lo there, the nightingale! Another of our airy creatures, which breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat,

that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight (when the very labourer sleeps securely) should hear (as I have very often) the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth and say, Lord, what musick hast Thou provided for the Saints in Heaven when Thou affordest bad men such musick on earth?"

I do believe that something of this spirit pervades most anglers; though, as there are some who are deaf and blind to the sights and sounds of nature round them, so are there some who, consequently, have no devout thoughts, and to whom the "looking through nature up to nature's God" are mere empty words. I would fain hope, however, that these are the exceptions; that the old lines which date back as far as 1706, are in the main still true,—

> "Angling tends our bodies to exercise,
> And also souls to make holy and wise
> By heavenly thoughts and meditation—
> This is the angler's recreation;"

and that most of those who seek recreation "with their angle" amid the works of nature, sympathize with the words and thoughts of old John Dennys, where he says,—

> "All these and many more of His creation,
> That made the heavens, the angler oft doth see,
> And takes therein no little delectation
> To think how strange and wonderfull they bee,
> Framing thereof an inward contemplation
> To set his thoughts on other fancies free;
> And while he looks on these with joyful eye,
> His mind is wrapt above the starry skie."

But if angling does not make men "religious" or even "devout," it certainly tends to make them philosophers—good "heathens"—as its practice is formative of many

moral virtues and excellencies, which are closely allied to Christian graces. I will not discuss the question which may arise as to whether these "virtues" "excellencies" and "graces" lead a man to be an angler, or whether by becoming an angler these virtues are developed; for I have taken the latter hypothesis for granted, though of course in these, as in many other matters, there is a process of "action and reaction" ever going on, more or less.

Or, to put it in a more abstract way, let us say the angler has certain "gifts" of a very enviable character, or even less strongly, that he is taught many admirable lessons. He has, for instance, the gift of, or is taught the lesson of contentment, calmness, and composure. This is how old Isaak puts it,—

"Sir" (says Piscator), "there are many men that are by others taken to be serious grave men, which we contemn and pitie; men of sowre complexions; money-getting men, that spend all their time first in getting, and next in anxious care to keep it; men that are condemn'd to be rich, and always discontented, or busie. For these poor-rich-men, wee anglers pitie them; and stand in no need to borrow their thoughts to think ourselves happie. For (trust me, sir) we enjoy a contentednesse above the reach of such dispositions."

And in another passage, thus,—

"Anglers, and meek, quiet spirited men, are free from those high, those restless thoughts, which corrode the sweets of life."

Colonel Venables, a contemporary of Walton, writes in a similar strain,—

"In the art of angling man hath none to quarrel with but himself, and this enmity, if any, can be easily composed. This recreation falleth within the lowest fortune to compass,—affording also profit as well as pleasure, in following which exercise, a man may employ his thoughts in the noblest studies, almost as freely as in his closet, the

minds of anglers being usually calm and composed, but when he has the worse success, he only loseth but a hook and line, or, perhaps what he never possessed, a fish; and suppose he takes nothing, yet he enjoyeth a delightful walk by pleasant rivers, in sweet pastures, amongst odoriferous flowers, which gratify his senses and delight his mind."

Aptly, too, has a well-known scholar thus hexametrised the virtue of angling,—

"Felix cui placidæ fraudes atque otia curæ
Piscator! tibi enim tranquillo in corde severum
Subsidet desiderium, tibi sedulus angor,
Dum tremula undarum facies, et mobilis umbra,
Dum puræ grave murmur aquæ, virtute quietâ
Composuêre animum, et blandis affectibus implent."

And Washington Irving, no mean authority, has said in the same key,—

"There is certainly something in angling that tends to produce a gentleness of spirit and a pure serenity of mind."

That patience is one of the virtues of an angler, is a trite theme. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." Who has not heard of the patience of the fisherman? An old angler and writer in 1692, says, with a slight touch of sarcasm, and perhaps after a blank day,—

"If patience be a virtue, then
How happy are we fishermen!
For all do know that those who fish
Have patience more than heart can wish."

But whether anglers have patience or not, certain it is that this virtue is a *sine quâ non* for success. I hold they have it, and that the constant pursuit of their pastime is constantly developing it. Bad sport, like bad sermons, calls forth this virtue. That some anglers are impatient I admit; and doubtless they were so in Walton's

time, as he advises them "to be patient, and forbear swearing, lest they be heard and catch no fish."

I shall probably seem to be somewhat over-doing this part of my subject, if I elaborate the many other "virtues" which I believe characterize the fisherman, and which angling tends to form and strengthen in him. Suffice it, then, to say that the angler, as a rule, is marked by many admirable qualities which stand him in good stead in the ordinary vocations of his daily life, and that angling is a nursery for these; such as concentration, calculation, and observation. It has been well said, that angling is "a sport that requires as much enthusiasm as poetry, as much patience as mathematics, and as much caution as housebreaking;" while John Dennys credits the perfect angler with every virtue that adorns the perfect Christian—faith, hope, charity, patience, humility, courage, liberality, knowledge, peaceableness, and temperance. Angling is certainly a good recipe for safe guidance, or, rather, safe action in many an eventful crisis of our lives, when our minds are strongly agitated. We are often on the spur of the moment almost irresistibly impelled to say some hasty words, to write some hasty letter, or commit ourselves to some hasty line of action. A kind Mentor, or our better and more reasonable self, says, "Sleep over it"—I say, "Fish over it."

Anglers, though I claim for them that they are humble-minded men, are on good terms with themselves, as indeed they ought to be. They are certainly philosophers, whose frame of mind is much to be envied. As said one of them,—

> "Sweet Nature around me; the world's troubles far;
> Believe me we fishers philosophers are."

A perfect angler is indeed a perfect man—our old friend, the τετράγωνος ἀνὴρ of Aristotle—a many-sided and a square-sided man—a "perfect cube;" one, who always presents a face and square side uppermost in all emergencies.

Anglers, too, enjoy the consciousness that their sport has less drawbacks than almost any other pastime that can be named; and though by no means cynics or misanthropes, they feel that Thomas Weaver was not far wrong, when he said,—

> "All pleasures, but the angler's, bring
> I' the tail repentance, like a sting:"

while the harmlessness of their amusement is an additional source of happiness. It is not "merely a pretty way of putting things," where Wotton sings of the fisherman as one,—

> "Who with his angle and his books
> Can think the longest day well spent;
> And praises God when back he looks,
> And finds that all was innocent."

As a recreation for professional men, the brain-workers of the human tribe, those who are liable to mental exhaustion in callings which involve continuous attention at a high pressure, and not infrequently induce mental depression, there is in my opinion nothing to be compared with fishing. No men stand more in need of periodical *rest* than our hard-worked clergy, barristers, physicians, and literary and scientific men; and the best kind of *rest* is that combined with recreation of a character which shall not further exhaust them. I hold it to be a most fatal mistake to suppose that the best means of recuperating an overwrought, a jaded or depressed mind, is to take violent bodily exercise, in the way, for instance, of Alpine climbing,

a long pedestrian or rowing excursion, or laborious shooting or deer-stalking. I have known many men come back from a month or six week's holiday, in which bodily exercise has been a main feature, worse men than they set forth. Angling supplies sufficient opportunity for taking exercise and laying in a stock of fresh air to such persons as I have mentioned, without entailing bodily exhaustion; while it affords abundant diversion and pleasureable excitement of not too exacting a character to the mind. It is the very kind of *recreation* which will restore both body and mind, and refit the man to return to work. As Phædrus says,—

> "Ludus animo debet aliquando dari,
> Ad cogitandum melior ut redeat tibi."

A word or two on angling as a sport and pastime for Ladies. Why should it not be so? It is *par excellence* the "gentle" art. Why, then, should not those pursue it whose nature is specially characterized by "gentleness"? The question of cruelty in angling I have already disposed of. Lady anglers need fear no greater qualms than gentlemen. Peter Pindar has sung quaintly and prettily enough in his *Ballad to a Fish of the Brook*,—

> "Oh, harmless tenant of the flood!
> I do not wish to spill thy blood;
> For Nature unto thee
> Perchance has given a tender wife,
> And children dear to charm thy life,
> As she has done to me.
>
> Enjoy thy stream, oh, harmless fish!
> And when an angler for his dish,
> Through gluttony's vile sin,
> Attempts, a wretch, to pull thee *out*,
> God give thee strength, oh, gentle trout,
> To pull the rascal *in!*"

But though an appeal from a domestic "platform" is supposed to have a greater influence on a woman than on a man, our lady angler may be proof against the poet's sentimentalism. Nor will she succumb, as Goethe's *Fisher* did, if perchance a "Syren Nymph" rises from the depths, and appeals to her,—

"Why thus my watery brood
With lies of human statagem,
To these death-heats delude?
Oh, could'st thou see how happy live
The little fish below,
Thyself beneath the flood would'st dive,
And bliss for ever know!"

The only difficulties I know of in reference to ladies angling, are the exposure to weather and the manipulation of certain baits by fair fingers; but these may easily be overcome.

Several ladies are now well known as expert salmon fishers, as the records in the *Field* and *Land and Water* testify each season. Some years ago I made the acquaintance of a lady and her husband, who were staying at the Sands Hotel, Slapton Lea, for jack-fishiug. The lady was a most enthusiastic angler, as indeed ladies always are when they take to it, and it was really a treat to see her in her waterproof apron *spinning* most artistically and successfully for *Esox Lucius* in that famous lake. But fly-fishing for trout is the most suitable angling for the fair sex, though I cannot recommend their wading. Is there a sport or pastime which can set a lady's figure off to better advantage than this? Mr. Millais! do let us have a picture of "A Lady Trout-Fishing!" There is no one who could do this half as well as yourself!

Here is an old song in which the ladies declare their intention to take to angling, though I will not hold them answerable for the somewhat involved meaning of the first stanza, or the Tate and Brady rhyme in the refrain,—

"By purling streams, in shady dell,
The angler tunes his vocal shell,
And, hark! invites the fair;
Soft and enticing are his lays,
And sweet to men of sense his praise—
Our smiles reward his care.
The jolly angler's sports we'll join,
And love with pastime shall combine.

"Too long has foolish custom crept
Between the sexes—too long kept
Those form'd for bliss apart;
The bottle's rude intemp'rate noise
The social charms of life destroys
Which woman's born t' impart.

"The chase ill suits our tender frame,
Exposure brings the blush of shame—
Indelicate display;
But see the fair with arm divine
Spring round the rod, and throw the line,
'Tis grace herself at play.

"We'll have the peaceful angler's joys;
The world's tumult, care, and noise
For calmer scenes resign;
Upon our cheeks health's ruddy glow
Ethereal beauty will bestow,
And make our charms divine.

"Boy, hither bring th' elastic wand,
Endued with magic by our hand,
'Twill charm the finny prey;
With graceful sweep, the line once thrown,
Fishes as well as men shall own
Our universal sway.
The jolly angler's sport, &c."

Edmund Waller, the most charming "song" writer in the English language, though he wrote two centuries ago, and for ever to be remembered as the author of the Ode *On a Lady's Girdle,* and himself, as Walton tells us, "a lover of the angle," has immortalized lady anglers in his poem entitled *On a Lady Fishing with an Angle,* and commencing—

"See where the fair Clorinda sits."

I would that the "screaming sisterhood" of these latter days would take to the Angle instead of to law, physic, and the assertion of "Woman's Rights." No one will deny their right to enjoy Fishing as a Sport.

NOTE IV.

FISHING AS A FINE ART.

περιφραδὴς ἀνήρ.
SOPHOCLES.

"*Oh, sir, 'tis not to be questioned but that it is an Art, and an Art worth your learning.*"—WALTON.

"*You see the ways a fisherman doth take*
To catch the fish, what engines doth he make.
Behold how he engageth all his wits,
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets."
BUNYAN.

Antiquity of angling—Ancient and modern fishing-tackle—Progress of angling as an "art"—Numberless questions to be considered by anglers as to habitats and habits of fish, tackle, baits, &c.—Numberless expedients to be resorted to—Education of modern fish—The angler a meteorologist, geologist, entomologist, and naturalist generally—Character of the angler by Gervase Markham—Use of aquaria to anglers—Some suggestions.

UNLESS mankind were vegetarians before the Flood, as some persons think they were from a comparison of the passages in the Book of Genesis, where to man is given dominion over the animal creation, it may almost be taken for granted that the capture of fish for food was among his earliest pursuits. Nets and spears would probably be the chief means used for such capture, but it is not less probable that hooks and lines, and perhaps rods, were

among the earliest "engines" employed in fishing. As I have said in the last Note, angling only became a "sport" as civilization advanced; but it was an "Art" before it was a sport. Possibly also we may regard Tubal-Cain, the "instructor of every artificer in brass and iron," as the "Father of Angling" as an Art, or at least the chief developer of it, and, perhaps the first maker of artistic fish-hooks in metal. Tubal-Cain was the direct descendant of Cain, the son of Adam, in the sixth generation, and it is to members of this branch of the human family we look as the authors of the earliest useful inventions and "elegancies" of semi-civilized life. A very ancient mythological tradition makes Halieus ("fisherman") the first builder of a fishing-boat, and Vulcan his son as the perfector of the art of fishing; and further identifies this Vulcan with Tubal-Cain. Tradition also connects Venus (Aphrodite—"born from the *sea*") with Naamah, Tubal-Cain's sister, who is said to have been one of the wives of Ham, Noah's son. Thus a knowledge of Fish and Fishing would have been introduced among the immediate descendants of Noah, to whom it would have been most useful, as fish were the only animals which did not suffer from the flood.

But all this for what it is worth. Certainly the old Phœnicians and Egyptians practised the "Art" of angling. So also the ancient Greeks, as Homer tells us

> "Of beetling rocks that overhang the flood,
> Where silent anglers cast insidious food,
> With fraudful care await the finny prize,
> And sudden lift it quivering to the skies."

In the Book of Job we read, "Canst thou draw out levia-

than with a *hook?* or his tongue with a *cord* which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a *thorn?*"—the last word probably referring to fish-hooks made of tough wood (?). In the prophet Habakkuk we read of fish being taken "with the *angle;*" and in Isaiah of "those that cast the *hook* into the river."

The Greeks and Romans of later times, as became civilized people, were anglers for diversion's sake, and artistic anglers too, as piscatory writers bear witness. A modern angler cannot fail to enter into the spirit of many of the passages from Oppian, and feel that the fishermen of old were of the same fraternity as "brothers of the angle" now. Here is a specimen of the old poet well rendered into our native tongue:—

"A bite! Hurrah! the length'ning line extends,
Above the tugging fish the arch'd reed bends;
He struggles hard, and noble sport will yield,
My liege, ere wearied out he quits the field.
See how he swims up, down, and now athwart
The rapid stream—now pausing as in thought;
And now you force him from the azure deep;
He mounts, he bends, and with resilient leap
Bounds into air! There see the dangler twirl,
Convulsive start, hang, curl, again uncurl,
Caper once more like young Terpsichore
In giddy gyres above the sounding sea,
Till near'd, you seize the prize with steady wrist,
And grasp at last the bright funambulist!"

and another—

"The fisher, standing from the shallop's head,
Projects the length'ning line and plunging lead,
Gently retracts, then draws it in apace,
While flocking anthias follow and give chase

As men their foe, so these pursue their fate,
And closely press the still receding bait.
Nor long in vain the tempting morsel pleads,
A hungry anthia seizes, snaps, and bleeds;
The fraud soon felt, he flies in wild dismay,
Whizz goes the line—begins Piscator's play!
His muscles tense, each tendon on the rack,
Of swelling limbs, broad loins, and sinewy back
Mark yon fine form, erect with rigid brow,
Like stately statue sculptured at the prow,
From wary hand who pays the loosening rein
Manœuvring holds, or lets it run again!
And see! the anthia not a moment flags,
Resists each pull, and 'gainst the dragger drags;
With lashing tail, to darkest depths below
Shoots headlong down, in hopes t' evade the foe.
'Now ply your oars, my lads!' Piscator bawls;
The huge fish plunges—down Piscator falls!
A second plunge, and, lo! th' ensanguined twine
Flies through his fissured fingers to the brine.
As two strong combatants of balanced might
Force first essay, then practise every sleight,
So these contend—awhile a well-match'd pair—
Till frantic efforts by degrees impair
The anthia's strength, who drain'd of vital blood,
Soon staggers feebly through the foaming flood,
Then dying turns his vast unwieldly bulk
Reversed upon the waves, a floating hulk.
Tow'd to his side, with joy Piscator sees
The still leviathan; still on his knees,
With arms outstretch'd, close clasps the gurgling throat,
Makes one long pull and hauls him in the boat."

There is a true piscatorial ring about these lines; but however much the anglers of old enjoyed their sport, they are far distanced by the moderns in fishing as a fine art. The truth is ancient tackle, notwithstanding the skill of Messrs. Tubal-Cain and Co., was of rough construction

generally speaking, though probably quite good enough for the capture of the uneducated fish of the period. Jointed rods were unknown to the ancients, but at the same time, as anglers are well aware, some of the best of modern rods, especially those of Irish make, are in one piece. The ancients used light flexible wood, or some kind of "reed" for these rods, which probably varied in size and weight according to the kind of fishing pursued. Their lines were made of hemp, and other fibrous substances, and sometimes horsehair; gut being a modern invention. They had no winches, or rings on their rods, and so played the fish simply on the latter, except of course when they used no rod at all, like "Piscator," in the last passage quoted from Oppian. He probably had his spare line wound round his left hand or wrist, and using his right arm as his rod, paid out "the loosening rein," drew in, and "let it run again," according to circumstances. Ancient hooks, of which there are many examples in different museums, varied much in form and size, and were made of steel, or, as Oppian says, of "*hardened* bronze," which metal the learned Dr. Badham reminds us was not composed of zinc and copper, like our softer alloy, but of tin and copper, and according to Pliny was so hard that it could be worked to represent the finest hairs of the human head. The hooks like ours had different "bends," and for temper were superior to a vast quantity made in the present day, and circulated among anglers by the trade. I hardly know a more vexatious thing than to lose a good fish through the snapping or bending of a bad hook. The maker of such is almost as wicked a man as a modern constructor of life-buoys, who filled his canvas with some very unbuoyable material, instead of cork, and

shipped them among his "appliances for saving life at sea"!

But though lacking the beautifully made rods of our time and winches, the ancients practised most of the kinds of fishing now in vogue. They were bottom fishers, using floats, and baiting with worms and gentles as we do, and also pastes flavoured with various chemicals. Humble bottom fishers were Antony and Cleopatra; and I mention them here not only to illustrate my discourse, but to show that I am acquainted with the story of the tawny queen, who in revenge for her lover's mean device of having live fish attached to his hook by divers, in order to win the "angling sweepstakes" they indulged in, caused her own diver to fix to Antony's hook a dried fish which he pulled up to his confusion—a story without which I suppose no book on angling would be considered complete. The ancients, too, were "trollers" and "live-baiters," at least for sea fish, as may be gathered from Oppian, who suggests the use of a live labrax if possible, and thus describes trolling with a dead one on something like our modern "gorge" hook, raising and sinking it alternately.

> "He holds the labrax, and beneath his head
> Adjusts with care an oblong shape of lead,
> Named from its form a dolphin; plumb'd with this,
> The bait shoots headlong through the blue abyss.
> The bright decoy a living creature seems,
> As now on this side, now on that it gleams,
> Till some dark form across its passage flit,
> Touches the lure, and finds the biter bit!"

But this is not all. The ancient Romans practised fly-fishing. Martial asks,

"Who has not seen the Scarus rise,
Decoy'd and caught by fraudful flies?"

And Dr. Badham quotes the following interesting passage from Œlian :—

"The Macedonians who live on the banks of the river Astreus, are in the habit of catching a particular fish in that river by means of a fly called hippurus. A very singular insect it is; bold and troublesome like all its kind, in size a hornet, marked like a wasp, and buzzing like a bee. These flies are the prey of certain speckled fish, which no sooner see them settling on the water than they glide gently beneath, and, before the hippurus is aware, snap at and carry him as suddenly under the stream as an eagle will seize and bear aloft a goose from a farm-yard, or a wolf take a sheep from its fold. The predilection of these speckled fish for their prey, though familiarly known to all who inhabit the district, does not induce the angler to attempt their capture by impaling the living insect, which is of so delicate a nature that the least handling would spoil its colour and appearance, and render it unfit as a lure. But adepts in the sport have contrived a taking device, '*captiosa quædam machinatio*,' to circumvent them; for which purpose they invest the body of the hook with purple wool, and having adjusted two wings of a waxy colour, so as to form an exact imitation of the hippurus, they drop these abstruse cheats gently down the stream. The scaly pursuers, who hastily rise and expect nothing less than a dainty bait, snap the decoy, and are immediately fixed to the hook."

This is circumstantial enough; and it may be taken for granted that the "speckled fish" was a member of the numerous *Salmonidæ* family who are still open to a rise being taken out of them.

The manufacture of fishing tackle at the present time is an art in itself, and intimately connected with Fishing as a Fine Art. I need hardly say there is tackle and tackle, dear and good, dear and bad, cheap and bad, and cheap and (sometimes) good. There is first-rate tackle of all kinds made in the capitals of the three kingdoms, in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. I must confess

that I give the palm to London-made tackle, though perhaps more trash is made up in London than elsewhere. This is the "cheap and bad" class. At the well-known shops of our chief metropolitan thoroughfares the best of all tackle is sold, most of the shops manufacturing their own goods of the best materials, and employing their own workmen. The names of many of these establishments are "household words" among anglers—such as Messrs. Little and Co., Williams and Co., Alfred and Sons, Aldred, Farlow, Bowness, &c. These sell only the best tackle. Some persons may perhaps class their wares under the "dear and good." Certainly *good* and in one sense *dear*, because, as a rule in life, all good articles required for constant use are dear. Dear too, because almost all goods in the shops of our chief metropolitan thoroughfares are dearer than those in less frequented streets and out-of-the-way districts, for the simple reason that shop-rent in the former is much dearer than in the latter. You may find, here and there, if you like to take the trouble to look for them, and if you are a judge in such matters, makers and sellers of "good and cheap" tackle in quiet streets and secluded quarters, and some of these make for the first-class shops which convert the "good and cheap" into the "good and dear." A great deal of good and moderately cheap tackle is made at Nottingham, but I know that some which is sold there is manufactured in London. My advice, however, to anglers, is to go to the "good and dear" shops, for there they are certain to get what they want. Experiments in "cheap" tackle generally end in disaster, loss of fish, and loss of temper, for even our "perfect" angler can be ruffled.

The manufacture of tackle is so extensive, that it may be almost dignified by the title of a "British Industry." Take, for instance, the well-known firm of Messrs S. Allcock and Co., of Redditch, who employ no less than 400 hands in the manufacture of hooks and all kinds of tackle, and indeed it may be said of everything necessary for an angler's outfit. They have a branch establishment in Canada, and may fairly be considered one of the leading wholesale firms in the trade. It is well worth a journey to see the business as carried on at Redditch. Making a long jump to the Far West, there is Messrs Hearder's establishment at 195, Union Street, Plymouth, which has celebrated its centenary. For a variety of most subtle inventions for the capture of both salt and fresh-water fish, commend me to the stock of Messrs Hearder. The "Plano-convex minnows" of different sizes, for trout, perch, and jack are admirable, and will kill well in almost any water. Mr. William Hearder is a very ingenious gentleman, but being a practical fisherman, does not indulge in mere "fancy" tackle and baits. He has conferred a great boon on anglers, who go westward, by providing them with an excellent map of river, lake, and sea fishing, in South Devon, and part of Cornwall, and also with a "Guide," giving a vast amount of most useful information. But better still, he is always most ready to give personal advice to anglers and sea-fishermen, who may be strangers in western districts. His name is well known to most angling readers of the *Field*, to which he has for many years contributed. I may mention also that Mr. W. Hearder designed and manufactured nets and other appliances for the recent "Challenger expedition."

Turning back for a moment to London tackle-makers,

it might almost be said that they have now brought their art to the highest perfection of which it is capable. Certain it is that most of the articles the best makers produce are models of workmanship. But their specialty is rods. Nothing can excel a good London rod. It is almost as true as a gun barrel. The London made "American spliced-cane" rods are very marvels of accurate manufacture, and are evidently becoming very popular among anglers who can afford to pay for them. These rods are made even to the end of the finest top joint, of six distinct pieces of split bamboo, only the outside and toughest part being used. These pieces are sawn by machinery with mathematical precision, glued together, and then bound with silk bindings at intervals of an inch and a half. The rods present a most handsome appearance, and for perfect balance, pliability, and durability cannot be surpassed. They are made like other rods, in joints, double-brazed of course; the butts are wound round with cane for about eight inches, in order to give the holder a good grip, and the moveable winch ferule is "scored" for a similar reason. About the lowest price for a trout rod of this class is 5*l.*, and for a salmon rod about 8*l.*, but at some shops the figures range much higher, some of the salmon rods costing as much as 20*l.* The prices certainly seem stiff; but then the workmanship and everlasting wear of these rods must be taken into consideration. Americans claim to be the inventors of this "spliced-cane" principle; but these rods were made in England years before they were heard of in America. Mr. J. C. Dougall, the celebrated gunmaker, of 59, St. James's Street, London, generally has in stock some of these rods by the best American makers, and I could hardly

believe the fact till I tested it, namely, that an 18 ft. rod weighs only 2 lbs. 8 oz., and a 12 ft. only 9 oz. So exquisitely are rods manufactured on the American principle, that it is almost impossible to believe that each joint, as I have said, is made up of six distinct pieces; but any one can satisfy himself that this is the case by seeing them "in the rough" at the establishment of a manufacturer. They look perfectly round like most other rods, but on close inspection, will be found to present an hexagonal formation. Spinning rods, manufactured on this principle, are very light and strong, and cost, I believe, about 5*l*. It is but fair to make special mention of these London-made "American" rods, as our "cousins" have a habit of appropriating inventions first introduced on this side of the "Herring-pond." Then, again, there is little or no doubt but that "spliced-cane" rods in *three* pieces were made in this country years before the American *six*-piece rods were heard of. Indeed I have been told that in 1851 Earl Craven had one, which had been in the family fifty years, and was still in use and in good order, though tons of fish had been killed with it. At the International Exhibition of the year just mentioned, these *three*-piece rods were shown; and they are still to be had at many of the London tackle-makers. They are most excellent implements, and, of course, cheaper than the six-piece rods. Anglers should certainly keep a rod or two of this class in their rod-rack.

It is almost impossible to speak too highly of the best London-made fishing-rods of all kinds, so perfectly balanced are they, so exquisitely finished, and so light for their length and strength. Talking of light rods, what

better present could a gentleman make to a "lady angler" than a pretty mottled gudgeon-rod, which is manufactured to weigh only 10 oz. with its two tops and bag, and yet will stand any amount of fair and even unfair work?

A marvellous amount of ingenuity has been shown of late years in manufacturing a variety of articles to meet the angler's wants. Compare, for instance, old-fashioned to modern landing-nets, with their whalebone rings and netting of prepared silk, which prevents the annoyance of artificial flies catching in it, with their hinges, and spring "knuckle joints" enabling them to be packed by the side of the rod, or slung over the arm; a slight jerk being all that is required to make them spring out straight for use. Even the more comfortable slinging of fishing-baskets has been attended to. Instead of being made after the old fashion, with a single strap to lie diagonally over the chest and back of the angler, and ruck up his collar to his great discomfort, a strap or webbing is passed over the left shoulder like a deacon's stole, while another comes round his waist and is attached to the shoulder-strap near the basket by means of a spring swivel which he can unfasten in a moment, and relieve himself of his load. By this arrangement, too, his right arm and side are free from impediment, and the waistband is also available for hanging his landing net on, by means of a flattened hook. Another admirable article I have recently noticed is a new multiplying winch. I know that the majority of artistic anglers are against multipliers, but I must side with the minority, for in trout-fishing, when you are wading, and especially when fishing up-stream, a multiplyer, in my opinion, is the greatest comfort both in playing your fish, aud in recovering your line

when needed. The multiplier in question is a great improvement on all former ones, it being almost impossible for the wheels, though increased in number, to get fixed. If I may be pardoned the oxymoron, I would say it is a perfect instance of "simple complexity."

London-tied artificial flies are known for their excellence wherever in the wide world a fly is thrown; though by this remark I by no means wish to decry the flies made elsewhere. Lessons on the art are, I believe, given by several London tackle-makers; but personally I have always felt that "life is too short," except for those most miserable of all men, who, like the frozen-out gardeners, "have no work to do," to make it worth while to tie one's own flies.

By the way, what a worry it is to many anglers when fish are rising, or even when they are not, to have to put on a fresh fly, to uncoil the whisp of flies in their books, and straighten the gut; and then how many flies are destroyed by replacing them hurriedly in their ordinary books again! I have always avoided all this by using a fly-book made many years ago at Bakewell in Derbyshire. It is about a foot long, and five inches broad, with each leaf double, and folding in towards the back. On the top and bottom of each leaf alternately is a piece of flannel about four inches square, and on this each fly can be hooked separately, the gut being perfectly straightened beforehand. The length of the book does not really increase the likelihood of its falling out of your pocket, and it prevents its turning crossways as ordinary books do, or getting mixed up with other things, and so rendered difficult of extraction. I have never seen one of this Bakewell pattern in use among

southern fly-fishermen; but I feel sure that if a London tackle-maker would produce some "Bakewell" books, he would benefit the fly-fishing community and himself too.

But perhaps this is of the nature of a digression, though the art of tackle-making is cognate to "fishing as an art;" and, depend upon it, a very great part of the comfort of an angler, and a great part of his success, is due to having good and artistic tackle. It is part of his art to know what is good tackle, and what suitable for different kinds of fishing; he should know the various constructions of rods, winches, lines, and hooks, the different qualities of gut, and the merits and demerits of the various articles of an angler's outfit. On all this I could discourse at length, but the ground has been so thoroughly travelled over and exhaustively described by Messrs. Francis Francis, Cholmondeley Pennell, and other modern angling authors, that I shall only incidentally refer to such matters in my Notes to follow on our different fresh-water fish.

As there has been a marked progress of late years in the art of tackle-making, so has there been in the art of angling. Fishing may fairly claim to be a "Fine Art." Comparatively speaking, our forefathers used but coarse tackle, and, though they loved the sport, hardly regarded angling as an art. It is difficult to imagine Walton and his fellows angling without a winch, though its use was known to Dame Juliana Berners, who calls it a "renninge vyce." Probably some of them kept a little extra line coiled in the left hand to let out when a big fish was hooked, or used their thumbs for winches, but generally a fish would have been killed by main force—i.e., the strength of the rod and line and the strength of the angler. This is how old Isaak speaks of *playing* a big fish :—

"Ay marry, sir, that was a good fish indeed; if I had had the luck to have taken up that rod, then 'tis twenty to one he should not have broke my line by running to the rod's end, as you suffered him. I would have held him within the bent of my rod, unless he had been fellow to the great Trout that is near an ell long, which was of such a length and depth that he had his picture drawn, and now is to be seen at mine host Rickabie's, at the George in Ware; and it may be by giving that very great Trout the rod, that is, by *casting it to him into the water*, I might have caught him at the long-run, for *so I use always to do when I meet with an over-grown fish;* and you will learn to do so too hereafter, for I tell you, fishing is an art, or, at least it is an art to catch fish."

Well, as Walton calls such fishing an *art*, I suppose we must admit that it was, after its kind. But when we compare it with the artistic handling of a big fish on a fine line and light, pliable rod by a modern professor, the old master's work gives one the idea of being very crude and rough. What would the old man have thought of the modern Nottingham style? I fancy he would have been more than astonished at seeing any such a method attempted. Such fine work was utterly beyond his ken. This introduction of the Nottingham style a few years ago I consider marked an era in the progress of fishing as a fine art. To see a first-rate Trent or Thames fisherman nick a barbel some thirty yards off or more as quickly and cleanly as yon would a roach just beneath the point of your rod, is indeed a pretty sight, or to watch him tenderly yet firmly handling a wattled monster of some 10 lbs. on his gossamer line and "bending reed." Then, again, to what perfection has the art of spinning been brought, say such as is practised on the Thames for Thames trout! As for artistic fly-fishers; I feel sure that Walton's friend Cotton, with all his knowledge and

skill, could not hold a candle to the most moderate of them were he to revisit "the glimpses of the moon."

There are few things which annoy me more than to hear persons with no taste for fishing, and utterly ignorant of its practice, speak of it as a contemptible sport, and utterly unworthy of being called by the name of an art. Of course one's conceit is a little hurt, and something akin to anger naturally rises at hearing one's favourite craft despised; and the skill of anglers absolutely ignored. It almost seems that some persons have an idea that any rod, any line, any float, any hook with any bait, in any part of the water, and at any depth, will do for any kind of fish; that all days and seasons are alike for all fish; and that one fisherman is as good or as bad as another. I suppose it is part of our trial in this sublunary state to "put up" with ignoramuses. To try and put them down is hopeless; to instruct them is impossible. To tell them that an angler has to know and to think of more things than any other sportsman only provokes an incredulous smile or elicits something like a personal insult.

And yet such is really the case. The angler, to be worthy of the name, must be like a general—a man who can make comprehensive dispositions, and at the same time grasp details. He must be ready to adapt himself to the circumstances of the moment, and to meet all sudden emergencies and difficulties. How great must be his knowledge and experience in all that concerns his art! He must know the haunts and habits of all different fish generally, and how these are modified in different waters and in different states of the same water, and at different seasons of the year. He must know the different kinds of tackle proper to be used for different fish and under different circum-

stances, his success in no slight degree depending on the nature of the rod, line, float, and hook he employs for the capture of the particular fish he is in quest of, and the judgment with which he puts his tackle together. He must be learned in the great variety of baits taken by different fish, being stored, not only with book-learning, but with what he has gleaned from brother anglers and acquired by his own personal experience. Then, again, he must be acquainted with the whole question of ground-baiting, on which so much has been written, and on some points concerning which scientific anglers still differ. These and many other matters of angling knowledge he must be master of, and, I need hardly add, of all the various niceties of handling his rod, working his winch and line, and striking, playing, and landing his fish. And all these matters of knowledge, and accomplishments, are only attained by careful study and a long and patient apprenticeship to angling. When an angler has become a learned angler, there is as much difference between his knowledge and that of an unlearned angler as there is between the knowledge of a Bacon and a country bumpkin; and when the angler has become an "artist," there is as much difference between *his* art and that of the bungler as between the art of a Titian and a public-house sign-painter—of a Phidias and a second-rate statuary of the Marylebone Road.

The thorough angler, too, is a man of as many expedients as our old friend πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς, the "resourceful" (if I may coin a word) Ulysses. He has need of them, indeed, to meet the vagaries and capriciousness of fish, the exigencies of the weather and water, and the constantly recurring difficulties of fishing certain spots; and

thus he must not only be well versed in all the ordinary knowledge and practice of his art, but be also a "ready" man.

That the angler should be all I have described him, and that fishing should be treated as a Fine Art, is absolutely necessary now-a-days, in consequence of the high education of modern fish. The expression, "high education" may perhaps raise a smile on the face of some non-angling sceptic, if perchance my Notes are scanned by such an one; but anglers well know what I mean by it. The fish of our rivers, lakes, and ponds are very different creatures now to what they were, say, some fifty years ago, when but one angler could be counted for every hundred at the present time who ply the gentle art. In former days there were miles and acres of water in the United Kingdom hardly ever fished; now there is hardly an inch which is not overworked, so popular has fishing become. The less fish are tried for in any particular water, the easier they are to catch. A mere tyro, with the clumsiest of tackle, can take fish where the race is unconscious more or less of the arts of his enemy, man. Some years ago I used to fish on what was almost a "virgin" pond, in private grounds at Blackheath, and I found no great difficulty in catching a dozen or so of carp and bream in an afternoon, weighing from 3 lbs. to 6 lbs. each. I should doubt whether there is a pond in the country where such a feat could be accomplished now. Out of a similar pond at Stratford, in Essex, when quite a boy, in a few hours I took enough carp, averaging 1 lb. a-piece, to fill all the available pails and watering-pots belonging to the house, lugging the fish up, often two at a time, on half-baited hooks, without intermission. They had never been

angled for before; but I am inclined to think the very large number of fish in the water, and the consequent scarcity of food, had something to do with the eager way in which they took the bait. Another instance of this sort of thing occurred to me in a pond, through which ran a very slight stream, at the bottom of the grounds of Ashbrittle Rectory, Somerset. The rector said he believed there were some trout in it, but he had never heard of any one trying for them. I made experiment of it at once, and at almost every cast with an ordinary red palmer I rose a fish, filling my basket in about the space of two hours with very pretty trout, ranging from ½ lb. to 1½ lb., and then giving up from sheer repletion of sport, if, indeed, simple slaughter of artless fish can be called sport. How many fish, I wonder, should I have caught in the same time in the well-fished trout stream hard by?

The denizens of any particular water gradually get "educated" by experience. "Suffering is teaching," says the old Greek proverb; and this is very true in reference to fish. It may be difficult to understand the intellectual, or perhaps I should say, psychological process of this education, and how the fear of man and the knowledge of his art and hostility is transmitted to the piscine progeny through the ova, just as the same gradually acquired fear and knowledge is transmitted through the egg or fœtus of birds and beasts. But there the fact is. Birds and beasts which, on their first introduction to man, displayed little or no fear of him, have gradually become "educated," and learnt to fly from him as their enemy, and to be suspicious of his wiles, shrinking from him almost as soon as they have seen daylight in this world. So it has come to pass with fish in our home

waters; and as the number of anglers increases, so will the shyness of the fish, and the difficulty of catching them. I verily believe that some fish know as well as the angler what is going on for their destruction; Thames fish in particular, which, perhaps, indulge in a piscine smile as they see and hear the punt moored, and recognize the descent of the familiar ground-bait, indicating most plainly the "carrying on the same old game."

Here I would quote a passage from Stewart's *Practical Angler* bearing upon this topic:—

"Much fishing," he says, "besides to a certain extent thinning the trout, operates against the angler's killing large takes by making the remaining trout more wary, and it is more from this cause than the scarcity of trout, that so many anglers return unsuccessful from much-fished streams. The waters also now remain brown-coloured for such a short time that the modern angler is deprived, unless on rare occasions, of even this aid to his art of deception; and the clearness of the water and the increased wariness of the trout are the main causes why the tackle of fifty years ago would be found so faulty now. Fifty years ago it was an easy thing to fill a basket with trout, not so now; then there were ten trout for one there is now. The colour of the water favoured the angler, and the trout were comparatively unsophisticated; now filling a basket with trout, at least in some of our southern streams open to the public, when they are low and clear, is a feat of which any angler may be proud. . . . Angling is in fact every day becoming more difficult, and consequently better worthy of being followed as a scientific amusement. So far from looking upon the increase of anglers with alarm, it ought to be regarded with satisfaction; the more trout are fished for, the more wary they become; the more wary they are, the more skill is required on the angler's part; and as the skill an amusement requires constitutes one of its chief attractions, angling is much better sport now than it was fifty years ago."

This is quite true; and though, perhaps, I may be charged by "outsiders" with somewhat exaggerated views of angling as an "art," I maintain that it is a most con-

summate art, and a science in which there is no "finality." It may, as indeed it does, sometimes happen that an ignoramus, with most unartisticlike tackle, "the clothes-prop and line style," as it has been called, will hook a big fish, and in a most unartisticlike style, succeed in capturing him; but no one, as a rule, in these days of highly cultivated fish, whether he pursue fly-fishing, spinning, or bottom-fishing, can have a reasonable hope of getting a basket of fish where the water is much fished, unless he have the best and finest of tackle, and be the thorough artist, man of knowledge, experience, and expedients, such as I have sketched the thorough angler to be. Old Isaak would stand but little chance of a prize in a modern "angling sweepstakes" in competition with the ordinary hands of our modern angling clubs, and a London or Sheffield roach angler would any day catch two fish to his one.

I might say more, and insist with truth that the perfect artistic angler must be an ichthyologist, a naturalist, and particularly an entomologist, so that he may be assisted in his art by his scientific knowledge of flies and other insects he uses in their natural state or imitated from nature, and also of the many varieties of worms, the difference and culture of which would take a long chapter to describe: that he must be a geologist too, in order to know the kinds of flies which may be expected to rise from the different soils of river beds, and the different insects which frequent them: and last, but not least, a meteorologist, so that he may know what to expect, and what to do according to the variations of the weather, and be able to account in some measure at least for the capriciousness of fish, which are much affected by atmospheric influences.

I notice in my edition of Best's *Art of Angling*, that the author, who was a learned and clever fisherman, has no less than *thirty* pages on "Prognostics of Weather," &c., so important did he consider it for an angler to be a meteorologist.

As an illustration of the value to the fisherman of some knowledge of natural history, I may mention an object which struck me very forcibly as I was wandering through the Piscatorial Exhibition held in June, 1877, at the Westminster Aquarium. It was a case of stuffed water ousels, and below them a case of some dozen or more water insects in their various stages, which prey upon the ova of trout. These insects are found in the bodies of water ousels on dissection, and thus the owner of a trout stream who might be inclined to shoot these interesting birds on the assumption that they destroyed ova, is taught that they are his best friends, from the fact that they destroy wholesale some of his worst enemies.

But here I must draw this note to an end, by quoting a quaint passage from old Gervase Markham's book, to which I have referred on page 38, on the character of an angler. He says,—

"A skilfull Angler ought to be a generall scholler, and seene in all the liberall sciences, as a grammarian, to know how either to write or discourse of his art in true and fitting termes, either without affectation or rudenes. Hee should have sweetness of speech to perswade and intice others to delight in an exercise so much laudable. Hee should have strength of arguments to defend and maintaine his profession against envy or slander. Hee should have knowledge in the sunne, moone, and starres, that by their aspects hee may guesse the seasonablenesse, or unseasonablenesse of the weather, the breeding of the stormes, and from what coasts the winds are ever delivered.

"Hee should be a good knower of countries, and well used to high wayes, that by taking the readiest pathes to every lake, brook, or

river, his journies may be more certaine and lesse wearisome. Hee should have knowledge of proportions of all sorts, whether circular, square, or diametricale, that when hee shall be questioned of his diurnall progresses, hee may give a geographical description of the angles and channels of rivers, how they fall from their heads, and what compasses they fetch in their several windings. He must also have the perfect art of numbering, that in the sounding of lakes or rivers, hee may know how many foot or inches each severally contayneth, and, by adding, subtracting, or multiplying the same, hee may yield the reason of every river's swift or slow current. Hee should not be unskillfull in musick, that whensoever either melancholy, heavinesse of his thought, or the perturbation of his owne fancies, stirreth up sadnesse in him, he may remove the same with some godly hymne or antheme, of which David gives him ample examples.

"Hee must then be full of humble thoughts, not disdaining, when occasion commands, to kneele, lye down, or wet his feet or fingers, as oft as there is any advantage given thereby unto the gaining the end of his labour. Then hee must be strong and valiant, neither to be amazed with stormes nor affrighted with thunder, but to hold them according to their natural causes and the pleasure of the Highest: neither must he like the foxe which preyeth upon lambs, imploy all his labour against the smallest frie, but, like the lyon, that seazeth elephants, thinke the greatest fish which swimmeth a reward little enough for the paines which he endureth. Then must hee be prudent, that apprehending the reasons why the fish will not bite, and all other casuall impediments which hinder his sport, and knowing the remedies for the same, he may direct his labours to be without troublesomenesse."

I have said there is no "finality" in the Art of Angling. Indeed, judging from experience, it is a question whether the high and still progressing education of modern fish will not eventually so baffle the art of the fisherman that he will consider the propriety of retiring from an unequal contest. Can we advance our art so as to keep pace with the advancing intelligence of our fish? We certainly must try. *Nil disperandum* is one of the most significant of the fisherman's mottoes. We must make

fresh experiments in angling. We must seek some new inventions in the way of tackle, new kinds of baits, new methods of angling. As a rule anglers are, I think, too conservative in their ideas, and are loth to adopt new notions. The Thames professional fishermen, excellent artists though they be, are remarkable for their aversion to anything new in the way of tackle or the way of fishing. And so to a great extent are most of the "locals" by the salmon and trout-rivers and other waters in the three kingdoms. They adhere to traditions too closely, and by their emphatic assert ons, that if *their* methods fail, none other will succeed, often prevent a stranger from trying some new method or expedient. But, while I should be the last to underrate "local" knowledge, I would counsel anglers to think and act for themselves, especially when they fail to get sport according to their own or local traditions. We must not be bound too closely by precedent. It was not many years ago since the "Nottingham style" was introduced on the Thames. But at first the Thames professionals and Thames anglers in general would not have it at any price; but it was soon demonstrated that great takes of fish could be had by it when all the traditional methods failed. There are possibly, indeed very probably, other "styles," not yet dreamt of in our angling philosophy, to be invented, which will be attended with similar success. It is really "something new" presented to them which the fish want, or rather which the angler wants to present to them. It is familiarity which fish gradually acquire even with the best methods that "breeds contempt," and enables them to rise superior to the fisherman's skill.

The multiplication of aquaria in the present day might,

I think, be utilized to advance the angler's art. He can take his stand by the side of the tanks and watch the various movements of fish, and especially their manner of taking their food, and ejecting what they do not care for, or are suspicious of. I am sure the angler might learn much from his observations, as a variety of suggestions which might be useful in his art would present themselves. At all events he would observe some interesting facts, which would account for more than one mystery connected with his craft. For instance, he would notice that some fish, especially the deep-bellied ones, take their food almost standing on their heads, and that some rise up tail first through the water after taking it. I noticed this particularly one day in the case of the tench at the Westminster Aquarium. The fact at once supplies the reason for our floats sometimes assuming a horizontal position on the water when a fish, especially a bream, bites; for a fish rising tail first from the bottom with the bait, at last has the shots on the line suspended from his mouth, and the float, relieved of their weight, consequently ceases to "cock."

A suggestion has been made, though I do not suppose seriously, that exhibitions of fishing in Aquaria tanks would prove attractive. The fisherman is to take his stand or seat of course above the tank, and then to go through all the usual processes, casting in his ground-bait, plumbing the depth, and angling for his fish *secundum artem*. But, joking apart, by such exhibitions, or rather I would call them experiments, anglers would learn many a lesson as to the biting of fish, and perhaps as to many other matters which belong to the art of angling. I would not, however, counsel such experiments being made

before the general public, for in the first place they would not care much about them, and in the second their visible presence might interfere to a great extent with the natural action (if I may so express it) of the fish. Only anglers should be allowed to witness them, and they should be concealed behind screens with "peep-holes," so that the fish, which at the best live a semi-artificial life in the tanks, should have every chance of giving information and suggesting angling expedients without their attention being distracted.

But perhaps the best way of observing the habits of fish would be to encase oneself in a diver's dress and descend into some good "swim," say on the Thames, and lying down with some arrangements to partially hide your recumbent figure, to take stock of the barbel and other denizens of the deep, as ground-bait is thrown in and an angler fishes the swim in various styles. I have thought too, that it would not be very difficult to fit a glass window in a clay bank well chosen hard by a suitable bit of water, and then for the observer, from an approach in the bank behind to make notes on the fish and the experiments of anglers. Or again, a water-tight box with windows in it, and a tube to supply air, might be utilized, and it might be so constructed as not to appear anything very unnatural when let down into the water with the observer in it.

Once more I must say it is time to conclude this "Note:" and I will do so, by again reminding the young angler who would become an *artist*, that though it is necessary for him to read instructional books on angling, and make his own experiments in the art, he should never miss an opportunity of taking a personal and practical lesson from an *artist*.

NOTE V.

THE TROUT.

(*Salmo Fario.*)

"*The wary Trout that thrives against the stream.*"

FRANCES QUARLES (1592—1644).

"*The Trout by Nature mark'd with many a crimson spot,*
As though she curious were in him above the rest,
And of fresh-water fish, did note him for the best."

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"*Swift Trouts, diversified with crimson stains.*"—POPE.

"*So shall the glory of the stream be thine,*
The spotted trophies of the tapering line."

IT may be asked why in "Notes on Fish and Fishing," which might reasonably be supposed to deal with *all* British fish that are the objects of the angler's pursuit, the salmon does not hold the first place and take up the greatest space of all. Why the Play of Hamlet with the part of the Prince of Denmark omitted? The simple answer is that this little volume is only what it is called —"Notes," and a kind of chit-chat about Fishermen and

Fish of the *ordinary* kind. The Salmon, though happily in a gastronomic point of view he is an *ordinary* fish in his season, having by judicious legislation been brought down at times to as little as a shilling per lb., and even less for retail purchasers, is in his piscatorial aspect an *extraordinary* fish, as the Salmon fisherman is a sportsman of an almost distinct species from that of ordinary anglers, fly fishermen included. Moreover, to deal satisfactorily with the Salmon and Salmon fishing would be impossible even in a very long chapter. The subject requires a book to itself, and perhaps some day I may attempt such a book, combining with Salmon and Salmon fishing a series of disquisitions on the different kinds of trout and trout fishing, which I can only cursorily allude to in the present Note, devoted as it must almost necessarily be to our Common River Trout.

The Salmon, *Salmo salar*, the "Prince of Fishes," is the representative of the Royal Family of the *Salmonidæ*, the most distinctive feature of which ichthyologically is the second dorsal fin, just above the tail, of an adipose or fatty character, and entirely destitute of fin rays. The Trouts, which are very widely distributed, being found even within the Arctic circle, all belong to this family, which is one of the families ranging under the Order of the *Malacopterygii* or "soft-finned" fish.

The *Salmonidæ* with which we have to do may be divided into three species—(1) The Migratory species, i.e. the "sea-going" Trouts; 2, the Non-migratory; and 3, the Charrs. Of the last-named, of which five or more distinct varieties are recognized by naturalists as found in British waters, it is only necessary to say that in consequence of their habits and comparative scarcity they do

not often find their way into the angler's creel, at least in any considerable number. They are best known in a form they often ultimately take, namely that of "potted charr," of which, by the way, potted "thunny" is an admirable imitation. They are a prettily marked fish, orange and red being the chief elements in their colouring.

The Migratory species, whose colouring is more or less silvery, is represented by the Salmon, *Salmo salar*, by the Bull Trout, *Salmo eriox*, called also the Grey Trout and Sewin, and by the Sea or Salmon-Trout, *Salmo trutta*, called also the White Trout. The Non-migratory species is distinguished by golden or yellow hues, especially on the lower part of the body, and includes the Common Trout, *Salmo fario*, the Great Lake Trout, *Salmo ferox*, the Lochleven Trout, *Salmo levenensis*, and according to some naturalists the Gillaroo Trout, so called from the structural arrangements of the coats of the stomach, which resemble the formation of the gizzard of the bird known as the Gillaroo. I do not of course mean that these varieties of trout are only to be distinguished from one another by their colouring; for they are distinguished also by the position of their teeth, the shape of their tail fins, their general conformation and other physical characteristics, with which it will take the young angler and ichthyologist some time to acquaint himself, while his difficulties will be increased by the fact that several of the above-named fish are called by different names in different localities, in some cases the names being actually interchanged.

For information as to the various modes of capture of the different species of trout just mentioned, and as to the localities, chiefly in Scotland and Ireland, where they are

to be found, I can only refer my readers to such standard works as those of Steward, Stoddard, Blakey, Pennell, Francis, and others, not forgetting the numbers of the *Fisherman's Magazine;*—and for special information as to the different stations for Trout fishing in Scotland I cannot do better than recommend Mr. Watson Lyall's *Sportsman's Guide,* to be obtained at almost any bookseller's and bookstall in the United Kingdom. My special business is with our Common Trout.

The Common Trout, *Salmo fario*—a member, as I have said, of the yellow or golden tribe, called also the Common *Brown* Trout ("to make confusion worse confounded")—is familiarly known to most anglers. We might almost call it the English Trout, for in English waters is it most abundant, though well distributed over Scotland and Ireland and most continental countries. There is hardly a county in England without its trout stream; but the waters of Hampshire, Devonshire, Derbyshire, and the five Northern counties bear off the palm. But though the Common Trout is a distinct species of trout, and by naturalists to be distinguished easily enough from the other species above mentioned, it is a remarkable fact that the trout in one river differ very considerably in form and colouring from the trout in another. Indeed I might almost go as far as to say that no two rivers produce trout shaped and marked alike. Every river seems to have its own "breed" of trout, though the difference in colouring is in many instances to be accounted for by the difference in the geological character of the beds of rivers, the aquatic vegetation, and the food most plentifully supplied to the fish.

Ichthyologically, the Common Trout is an interesting

fish. Unlike our other fresh-water fish, it spawns in the winter months, and thus follows the habits of the salmon, making its way into shallow water and routing up the gravel to cover the ova. The majority of trout probably only spawn in alternate years. A trout is a long-lived fish, and there are authenticated instances of its living over twenty years. In the back-yard of a farm-house at the head of Chapel-le-Dale, Yorkshire, I saw several trout in a little pool which issued from a rock, and was told that they had been there nearly twenty years. They spent most of their time in the dark under the rock, but came out into the light directly food was thrown to them. The trout in most rivers is of slow growth; and it is a remarkable fact, which I have not yet heard satisfactorily explained, that in many rivers the great majority of trout are of one size within an ounce or two. There *seem* to be no little and no big ones. Order and discipline evidently reign supreme in the community of river trout, though their chief law seems to be "Might is right." The biggest fish have the choice of haunts, which they rigidly stick to; and when any number of fish are lying near one another, the rule is in everything, *seniores priores*—"the biggest first." Trout pair in the summer, and are credited with being loving husbands and wives, and evincing the utmost solicitude for each other's welfare; at least in Italian streams, as an Italian author bears witness in his *Loves of the Fishes*.

Our ordinary river trout do not generally attain any great size. In many waters, notably in the small streams of Devonshire and Wales, they are reckoned only by ounces, a fish of six or eight ounces being considered a monster. The limit of weight in some rivers is about two

pounds, but in others, the Hampshire rivers for instance, three and four-pound fish are frequently caught. Perhaps six pounds might be said to be the greatest weight attained by common river trout, I mean by those which really frequent the rivers, for out of large ponds and lakes fed by running water, true common river or Brown Trout have been taken of between twelve and fourteen pounds.

And this remark leads me at once to make some jottings in reference to a trout about which I own I am specially enthusiastic, I mean the "Thames Trout." He is the "Prince of Trout;" and he is "one by himself," as the country folk say. He differs from all other kinds of trout. He is not of any distinctive species yet recognized by naturalists, yet he is very distinctive. He is not of the family of the Great Lake Trout, *Salmo ferox;* nor is he a Bull Trout, *Salmo eriox;* nor a White or Sea Trout, *Salmo trutta.* Ichthyologically he is certainly a Brown or Common Trout, *Salmo fario,* but truly an *uncommon* Common Trout. Now Brown Trout, as I have said, though all of one family, vary very much according to the water they inhabit, and differ one from another in shape and colouring, in texture of flesh and taste. Yet they are all Brown or Common Trout. But the Thames Trout, by which I mean not the varieties of trout which have been very properly put into the Thames of late years, imported from the High Wycombe stream and elsewhere, but the veritable Thames trout, the "real original," known to generations of anglers back to the time of Walton, is entitled to rank by himself, for he really is a very distinctive fish, *sui generis* in form, colouring, and, it may be added, habits; while the size he reaches places him outside the ordinary varieties of common trout. It

might almost be said that the weight of a real Thames trout begins where that of an ordinary river trout ends; and certainly it is very strange that seldom is a real Thames trout caught under three pounds. Like some men and women, of whom it is difficult to realize the fact that they were once babies and afterwards children toddling about "on their own hook," Thames trout *seem* always to be more or less at maturity.

It is not easy to fix a limit of size to these grand fish, but they have been taken by fair angling up to 15 lbs. or 16 lbs. Yarrell mentions one of 15 lbs. caught on the 21st of March, 1835; and the one in a case at the well-known hostelry close by Marlow Weir must have been at least 16 lbs. On May 31, 1834, a 14 lb. fish was caught by Lieut.-General Sir Samuel Hawker, near Richmond. In October, 1874, one of 11½ lbs. was picked up dead near Ditton, and he would certainly have weighed 16 lbs. if he had been in condition. Some years before that, about 1862, one was found dead at Weybridge weighing over 23 lbs., though out of condition, his length being 40 inches and his deepest girth 22. Mr. Frank Buckland seems to doubt whether this really was a veritable Thames trout; however, it looked very like one, though its colouring had gone to a great extent, and its fan-like tail was more suggestive of a trout than of a salmon. But be this as it may, Thames trout will certainly grow to something like 20 lbs., though, as old age creeps on them, their nozzles, especially the under jaw, grow malformed like those of kelts, and gradually turning up over the upper one render them less and less able to catch their baits and eat them. Thus they fall away, and at last die of sheer starvation. Still, it is not often that a fish over 12 lbs. is

taken, but the season will yield several from that weight ranging down to 6 lbs.

And what a splendid fish is one of these "speckled beauties!" I hold that a well-conditioned fish of this class is one of the most beautiful objects in animated nature. His symmetry and his colouring are unexceptionable. He is more beautiful both in form and colour than the most beautiful salmon that ever ran up fresh from the sea, and when contemplated by his captor immediately on being "banked" is a richer feast for the eyes than the prettiest *Salmo salar* that Hampshire Avon, Severn, Tay, Tyne, Thurso, or Shannon ever produced. *Salmo fario* of the Thames v. *Salmo salar* all the world over; the latter charmingly symmetrical, and silvery as you will, and beyond compare more beautiful than all silvery fishes; but the former resplendent with all the hues of the rainbow, and others to boot; yet not a mere gaudy creature like the brilliant fish of the Mediterranean, but with a harmony of bright colours, which subdue but do not extinguish one another, and such as no artist could have conceived and few can imitate. In addition, moreover, to his beautiful symmetry and colouring, he gives one from his build the very idea of a strong fish—Tennyson's "lusty" trout— a very ideal of a fishy Apollo and Hercules combined.

Gastronomically he is as good as outwardly he is beautiful. He is pink as any salmon, and when cooked breaks into flakes like a salmon, and with as much "custard" between them; and your *gourmet* will tell you that he has a more exquisitely "gamey" flavour than the best Christchurch crimped salmon has ever yet developed. Many recipes have been given for cooking him, some of which

may be found in quaint Thomas Barker's *Angler's Delight* of 1657, and all kinds of sauces, compounded of almost every ingredient, have been recommended. But it is high treason to subject such a fish to the indignity of condiments and combinations such as these. It suffices to boil him simply, with a little salt in the water, or better still to crimp him and broil in paper in simple cutlet form. But far better still not to eat him at all. He is altogether too grand a fish for the pot. If you are fortunate enough to capture a grand Thames trout, hand him over to a cunning taxidermist, who will put him in a case for you, and you will have something to be proud of, and "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." Any future ones which fall to your lot serve in the same way, and send them as presents to your friends. The nearest relatives to the Thames trout are the large Colne trout, and those of other tributaries of the Thames, and they may be called first cousins, while those of the Lea seem second cousins. The best districts for Thames trout are those of Hampton, Chertsey, Laleham and Penton Hook, Windsor, Maidenhead, and Marlow.

And what a pity it is that there are not more Thames trout to be taken by ardent fishermen, considering how beautiful and good they are! Can anything be done to increase the supply? Well, a good deal has been done in the way of stocking the Thames with small trout from the breeding ponds at Sunbury and importations from other rivers; but, as has been said, these additions have not all been veritable Thames trout, and the majority seem to be either destroyed by the jack or are washed away from want of proper "hovers." The strange part of the business is that the stock of veritable Thames trout does not

seem to vary much from one year to another, though the numbers actually captured during the trout season—i.e. from the beginning of April till the 10th of September—*do* vary. It would almost seem that some recondite law is at work which keeps down, at a certain low average, the veritable Thames *farios*. Taking one year with another, perhaps not more than a hundred, sometimes not so many, fish are captured in the season between Teddington and Oxford; and this in round numbers does not give one fish to each mile of water, and probably there is not an average of four fish, say over 3 lbs. each, disporting themselves per mile for that distance.

It may be asked, therefore, whether it is worth while to try for Thames trout at all? Is the game worth the candle? The ardent fisherman will certainly say—yes, by all means; for he knows that the slayer of a large Thames trout at once becomes a piscatorial celebrity. But it is not every one who can pursue Thames trout-fishing, for it involves time and money; and it is not every one who can get a Thames trout, never mind what time and trouble he expend. Still there are many anglers who specially affect Thames trout-fishing. The lottery which in a certain sense success is, and the skill required in this kind of fishing, are to them among its chief charms.

To spin properly for your quarry you must be an adept at the art, and you often have to practise it under great difficulties—as, for instance, when the only available vantage-ground for fishing a weir is from a narrow weir-beam, with the water rushing and thundering beneath your feet like any *Cataract of Lodore*. It is a sight worth seeing to watch a Thames puntsman fish a weir from this coign of vantage, and gather his line in the palm of his left hand

after each cast. Your bait, be it gudgeon, bleak, small dace, or large minnow, must spin with mathematical correctness, or it has no charms for a Thames trout, and there is not one angler out of twenty who can put his bait on correctly, whatever be the style of flight he uses. And even granted that you are an adept in the art, and most patient and persevering, you may not meet your reward for many days. If I remember rightly Mr. Alfred, the well-known fishing-tackle maker of Moorgate Street, about twenty years ago took twelve good trout in nine days' spinning between Chertsey and Walton, a feat never eclipsed and rarely approached in the annals of Thames trout-fishing. On an average I should say that a fisherman does not get a Thames trout under six days' spinning.

The angler prizes above all things a tussle with a Thames trout. He can afford to wait days—nay weeks for it, for when it does come it is a case of Greek meeting Greek. The sensation of killing a salmon is a grand one, but not to be compared with that of capturing a large Thames trout. There is really more skill in attaching one of these *farios* than a *salar* to your rod and line, and when you have attached one, it is sport indeed. Perhaps the first rush or two of a salmon is more impetuous than that of a Thames trout, in comparing two fish of equal weight, but the Thames trout has more runs in him than the salmon. He has "staying powers" of the first order, and is as full of expedients to save his life as any *Salmo salar*. There is no doubt about the "running" of a Thames trout. It is a fierce rush he makes at your bait when he has made up his mind to rush at all. As soon as he has struck the fight commences. He—

"Flies aloft and flounces round the pool."

Nec mora nec requies for either of you. If a term may be borrowed from the hunting-field, it is "a sharp burst." Let the fisherman poet, Gay, for a moment describe the contest, his verse applying to a large Thames trout equally well as it does to a salmon :—

> "Soon in smart pain he feels his dire mistake,
> Lashes the wave and beats the foamy lake;
> With sudden rage he now aloft appears,
> And in his eye convulsive anguish bears;
> And now again, impatient of the wound,
> He rolls and writhes his straining body round;
> Then headlong shoots beneath the dashing tide,
> The trembling fins the boiling wave divide.
> Now hope exalts the fisher's beating heart,
> Now he turns pale and fears his dubious art;
> He views the trembling fish with longing eyes,
> While the line stretches with th' unwieldy prize;
> Each motion humours with his steady hands,
> And the slight line the mighty bulk commands;
> Till tired at last, despoil'd of all his strength,
> The game athwart the stream unfolds his length—"

And so on, till safely landed he—

> "Stretches his quivering fins, and gasping dies."

But oh, the disappointment at losing your fish when you have battled with him awhile, full of hope and nigh unto victory. It not unfrequently happens that Thames trout do get away after being hooked, and this probably arises from the traditional use of some four or five triangles of hooks, and those, too, of too small a size, instead of one triangle, or at most two, in accordance with the most reasonable teaching of that Master of Arts in spinning, Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell. Possibly hardly a

Thames trout gets through a season without being pricked; and it must surely require, in the case of such a wary and intelligent fish, all the close time from September 10th to April for him to forget past experiences of mathematically spinning baits. Another disappointment is that of trout "running short" and only touching the tail of your bait; and yet another to which the spinner for Thames trout is constantly subjected, especially at the beginning of the season, viz., hooking jack, chub, and barbel, and perhaps after a good bit of fighting finding he has not only not got a trout, but a fish which is legally out of season, and which he must return to the water. The most skilful, however, are not often taken in, for they know partly by the strike and partly by the "action" of the fish afterwards whether it be a trout or not.

Another way of fishing for Thames trout is by live baiting, as for jack. Some object to this as unsportsmanlike; but my experience is that it is as difficult to take a fish by this means as by spinning. I hold, therefore, live baiting is quite legitimate.

Perhaps the best advice to one contemplating Thames trout-fishing is—"Don't." Let us, however, suppose our spinner successful, and that he has taken a six, eight, ten or twelve pounder, or more than one, as sometimes occurs. Where is then a prouder or happier man in all creation? His deeds will be spoken of far and wide. The news of the take travels in all directions, along the river banks. *Volitat per ora virum.* He is a hero, "The man that killed a — pound trout at ——." He is immortalized in the angling columns of many journals. Skill and perseverance have had their reward, and from an

angling point of view he can say, "I have not lived in vain!"

You may catch the smaller Thames trout and those which have been imported into the river with the artificial fly, but seldom a large Thames trout. These are, however, occasionally taken with red palmers, May flies, and early in the season with the large stone fly. Grilse and even Salmon flies have sometimes been used with success. But your Thames trout proper is not much of a fly-eater. His favourite food is "small fry," of which he gets abundance and on which he gets fat.

And now back again to the Common Brown Trout. And whence the name "Trout"? The word has always sounded to me as a "full round" word, suggestive of a good sound fish; but this must be mere fancy. Izaak Walton remarks that Gesner says it is "of a German Offspring." What German word, however, it can be connected with I do not know. The ordinary German for "trout" is "forelle."

The distinguishing letters of our word are evidently *tru*, as seen in the Anglo-Saxon *truht;* and these are found in several languages, *e.g.* in the French *truite*, the Italian *trota* and Spanish *trucha*. The late Latin word is *trutta*, from the older word *tructa*, a glutton, which is the Greek *troctes* (τρώκτης), "a glutton," and also "a sea fish with sharp teeth," mentioned by Ælian. And thus we get our word "trout," originally from the Greek *trogo* (τρώγω), to "gnaw" or "eat." So after all the pretty-sounding word "trout" really means something equivalent to a "greedy devourer;" and taking all things into consideration, this is no great libel on our *fario*.

My little book, as I have said in the preface, is not an

ambitious one; nor is it intended to supply the place of *Guides, Instructors,* and *Vade Mecums.* It is what is called simply "Notes," and the "Notes" on the different fish of our waters are only "jottings" etymological, ichthyological, piscatorial, or, to keep up the Greek terminology, halieutical, and gastronomical; and these thrown together without much definite order. I cannot, therefore, undertake to give a list of the trout rivers in the United Kingdom, their seasons and peculiarities, and much less a list of the flies which by tradition and experience are said to be best for each. All this and much more can only be gathered from such books as I have mentioned at the beginning of this note, to which I may add Mr. Francis's *Book on Angling,* which has very recently and most deservedly entered on another edition, Hofland's *British Angler's Manual,* which will never be out of date, Rooper's *Thames and Tweed,* Ronald's *Fly-Fisher's Entomology,* and Cutliffe's *Trout-fishing in Rapid Streams.* But all anglers, unless they are well acquainted with the water they are about to fish, should endeavour to gain personal information from their friends or others about it. Information thus gained should supplement all book knowledge, and would often prevent a fruitless expedition.

Fly-fishing—i.e. whipping the stream with an artificial fly is, I need hardly say, the most orthodox way of fishing for the common trout. It is also the most artistic. It is also the most enjoyable. It would be difficult to say what pursuit, sport, or pastime can yield such genuine pleasure as a day's fly-fishing along a pretty river does to the angler who has the accomplishments and tastes I have credited to him: say along the Teign, the Dart, the

Barle, the Exe, in the far land of the West, the land of red cattle and clotted cream, of junkets and cider, of meadows and moorland, of hills and dales and purling streams, the very paradise of birds, ferns, and wild flowers. I know these Devonshire rivers well, I may say every stream in the country; and the humblest meadow brook is not without its charms, or without its trout. Such a humble brook has Carl Waring recently described in the American *Forest and Stream,* in the following pretty stanzas:—

"You see it first near the dusty road,
Where the farmer stops with his heavy load
At the foot of a weary hill;
There the mossy trough it overflows,
Then away with a leap and a laugh it goes
At its own sweet, wandering will.

"It flows through an orchard gnarl'd and old,
Where in spring the dainty buds unfold
Their petals pink and white;
The apple blossoms so sweet and pure,
The streamlet's smiles and songs allure,
To float off on the ripples bright.

"It winds through the meadow scarcely seen,
For o'er it the flowers and grasses lean
To salute its smiling face;
And thus, half-hidden, it ripples along,
The whole way singing its summer song,
Making glad each arid place.

"Just there, where the water dark and cool
Lingers a moment in yonder pool,
The dainty trout are at play;
And now and then one leaps in sight,
With sides aglow in the golden light
Of the long, sweet summer day.

"Oh back to their shelves those books consign,
And look to your rod and reel and line,
Make fast the feather'd hook!
Then away from the town, with its hum of life,
Where the air with worry and work is rife,
To the charms of the meadow brook."

Yes—"Away from the town." Those best know the joys of a fly-fishing holiday, who are perforce—

"Long in populous cities pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,"

and when their holiday time comes hie them far away from the

"Fumum et opes, strepitumque Romæ,"

whether their Rome be London, Birmingham, Manchester, or some populous place taken cognizance of by that most statistical of public functionaries, the Registrar-General. What a blessing it is that a few hours' journey will land us in almost any direction, north, south, east, or west, by the banks of the trout stream we have fixed on; and what a blessing it is that thousands in the course of a year can thus find recreation, and recruit both body and mind in the innocent amusement of fly-fishing.

As to the Art of Fly-fishing, more has been said and written on this particular branch of sport than on any other; and none have given rise to more "vexed questions" than this. The proverbial differing of doctors is as nothing to the differing of fly-fishers, both as regards theory and practice. Fly-fishing may almost be described as an art without any fundamental rules; I mean rules

to which all will give adherence. And this, perhaps, is one of its charms; for though you may be well stored with the precepts of professors, their precepts vary so much that you have the pleasure of selecting which you shall follow or trying them all by turns.

I shall only attempt to jot down, in a higgledy-piggledy way, a few observations on fly-fishing for trout, based on my own experience, throwing them partially into the form of advice to "young" anglers, for I will not dare to counsel old ones. If there is no finality, as I have suggested there is not, in the art of angling generally, there certainly is not in this branch of it. Trout, even more than other fish, have become "educated," and their capture is becoming more and more difficult every year. The individual experience, therefore, of every fisherman, presuming of course that he has studied his art and practised it assiduously, is a contribution to the general stock, even though he may have nothing actually new to suggest.

As to tackle. A *cheap* fly rod, whether a single or double-handed one, is a delusion and snare. Always buy of a first-rate maker. Lightness, i.e. as far as is consistent with strength, is a great consideration in a rod, as whipping a stream is a far greater physical labour than many persons would suppose. There has been a long controversy as to the amount of pliancy and stiffness fly rods should possess, some persons advocating very pliant rods, others stiff ones, i.e. comparatively stiff. You will do well, I think, to use a medium one. You have greater command over your fly, especially in windy weather, with a stiff one, but fewer fish are lost when playing them with a pliant one. The "happy mean," therefore, is the best.

Let your line taper at both ends, so that when you have to some extent worn away one end you can reverse the line on your winch and utilize the other.

Notwithstanding the general *consensus* of condemnation of multiplying winches, I am for multipliers. They are a great comfort when you are fishing *up* stream, and especially when you fish heads down. I know they are apt to get out of order, at least ordinary ones are, but some are made now with extra wheels, and, though in one sense more complex, so arranged that a "dead lock" is next to impossible, as I have noted on page 109.

None but the best gut, whether whole or drawn, should ever be used for collars. I don't believe in stained gut, unless the water is very discoloured. It must be remembered that the fish are looking upwards, with the light and the sky for a background. It would be quite another matter if they were looking down into the water on your collar.

What shall I say of flies? It is one of the most difficult things in the world to say or write a little when there is much which can be written or said. It would take a dozen or twenty pages even briefly to mention the various views which have been advanced. They range from the theories that almost go as far as to maintain that a different fly is required for every day in the year and almost for every hour in every day, to the simple reduction of the number to three, or at most half a dozen flies as all that are necessary all the year round. Here again I think the old saying, *medio tutissimus ibis*, is applicable. To load yourself with *swarms* of flies tied up in huge bunches in your fly-book is folly. There are scores of flies made which might be utterly abolished. Still I do not think the ordi-

nary fly fisherman would generally meet with a fair share of success if he limited himself to the very meagre supply Mr. Pennell would allow him, or even the slightly-enlarged list of Mr. Stewart. Mr. Francis Francis has, in my opinion, hit the happy mean. The young angler cannot do better than thoroughly study that part of Mr. Francis' book relative to flies and fly-fishing. I see in some of the London tackle-shops fly-books containing the thirty-two varieties of flies recommended by him, with the name of the fly opposite its compartment, and a few remarks on it, the flies also running consecutively according to their mouths.

As a rule the old acknowledged flies, such as the palmers, the duns, the spinners, the February red, the March brown, the alder, the stone, the sand fly, and others, with the names of which the young fly-fisherman soon becomes familiar, will kill, if anything in the way of a fly will. The list of flies given by Walton's *collaborateur*, Cotton, will be found to comprise most of the best killers of the present day.

At the same time "fancy" flies are not to be neglected. They will often do execution when the orthodox flies fail. Nor, again, are "local" flies, as I may call them, to be despised. Though you may have taken to your fishing-ground a very cloud of insects in your well-stocked book, tied by some of the best hands in London, and "warranted to kill" in all waters and under any circumstances, do not despise local knowledge and practice. Rather seek out some enthusiastic brother fly-fisher in the neighbourhood; and as there is a kind of freemasonry among the angling craft he will give you a hint or two worth having—the local doctor, or the parson, or some less reputable character,

the amateur poacher, but a veritable sportsman, who ties his own flies and will often imitate some creature he sees on the water at a moment's notice. You can soon hear of him, and, I fear, often find him at one of the hostelries of the district. Be open with him. Tell him you want a hint or two. Do not forget that he is not averse to "refreshment." Suggest humbly that you would feel honoured with his company on the morrow to carry your creel and mackintosh, &c., and you will probably have secured a friend, philosopher, and guide, who will put you up to a thing or two, and conduce to filling your basket.

The following, I think, is a sound principle. In comparatively smooth water your artificial fly should be as good an imitation of *nature* as possible, for the fish take it believing it to be a *real* fly. It is otherwise in rapid streams, or parts of streams, where the fish have not so much opportunity of observation or time to think. There they dart at your lure simply because they hope it is "something to eat."

This another. Use a dark fly for dark waters and a bright fly for bright waters, notwithstanding the most apparently reasonable arguments to be adduced *per contra*.

Remember there is a great deal in the *size* of your flies. You must learn beforehand the peculiar gastronomic fancy of the fish in the stream you contemplate fishing. Fish of 4 lbs. take a tiny gnat on a tiny hook in some of the Hampshire waters, while in many streams trout no larger than your middle finger insist on having a large fat hackle fly fit for a 5 lb. chub. Read "Stoddart" on the *size* of flies. I am a firm believer in his views on this point. Generally, as the water in a river lowers and clears, decrease the size of your flies. When the water begins to rise trout seldom take the fly well. They seem alarmed.

I believe that the *colour* of flies, generally speaking, is of more importance than their *form*, though I am puzzled somewhat when I reflect that a fish viewing a fly from beneath has a light background, and that consequently (as one might think) the under part of the fly would present but little actual colour to him.

A gentle or even small strip of white kid glove put on the bend of the fly-hook will induce trout to rise when nothing else will.

When trout are "glutted" with some natural fly, say the May fly, a purely "fancy" artificial fly will often get a rise out of them, just as something new or fanciful will excite the jaded appetite of an alderman.

Here are some more miscellaneous memoranda, and I must confess very disjointed.

Let your habiliments be of sober though rather lightish *grey*, with cap or flexible wideawake to match, and your waterproof, which you may want occasionally, *also grey*, and well ventilated. The grey tweed waterproofs, made by George Cording (son of the "Original" Cording), 231, Strand and 125, Regent Street, are the best I know of. Use wading boots or stockings, otherwise you lay up a stock of rheumatism for future days. The "porpoise-hide" fishing-boots, made by Frank Porter, of 40, Ludgate Hill, are of admirable material and workmanship, and very moderate in price. Let your shoes, or waterproof boots, be studded with large nails, but *not very close together*, for masses of iron, instead of preventing, facilitate slipping.

Always wade if you can, and when you cannot, crouch, stoop, and crawl as best you may, and hide yourself behind bushes, trees, rising ground, &c., whenever possible.

All the above, for this simple reason, that the trout, the most quicksighted of fish, may not see you more than you can help; for remember that according to the teaching of Mr. Ronalds (referred to in the Note on Ichthyology), your figure, and even the part of it which you sometimes fancy is hidden, is projected by refraction far up above the fish's line of sight. Hence, also, fish *up* stream when you can rather than *down*. Moreover, as trout lie with their heads up stream, and cannot see behind them, you can get pretty near them, and so use a short line, which of course you can throw to a desired spot with much greater accuracy than a long one. There have been many literary battles over the *up* stream and *down* stream theories of fishing. The *up* stream fishing is the most difficult in consequence of your collar and line having an unpleasant tendency to make their way very quietly to your feet; but there can be no doubt about its being the right practice. A good fisherman working *up* stream will kill nearly two fish to every one killed by a good fisherman working *down*. Sometimes the wind and other circumstances make it impossible to fish up: then, of course, nothing remains but to fish *down*.

As you come to each reach of a stream, make your dispositions thoughtfully, as a general would, how best to work it—mark the most likely spots for your fish to lie, and determine how they are best fished. This done, fish the water nearest to you first, and so on till you have thoroughly searched the whole. Remember that a very shallow spot will hold a big fish.

Watch your line and collar very carefully, for in rapid streams—such, for instance, as they mostly are in Devonshire—your fly will very often be under water when taken,

and consequently you will not *see* your fish "rise." Your hand must be as quick as your eye, I might say your intuition, when your fly is taken; for unless hooked your trout ejects fur and feathers in a moment of time. Remember that early in the year trout generally lie in the quietest part of the water, for though in early streams they are "in season" in February and March, they have not yet recovered their full strength after spawning.

Two flies are quite enough to use, your "stretcher" or tail fly, and one "drop" or "bob" fly. In rapid streams try and learn to use the latter in spots where you cannot get your former comfortably, or at least in a style to attract fish. Often it is a most excellent plan to cast your collar or tail fly on a stone in the river, and then by gradually tightening your line let your "drop" fly search the eddy at the back.

Do not use a longer line than you can help, and do not pay out line to reach a given spot unless absolutely necessary; rather wade or crawl nearer.

When you see a fish rise, cast your fly as near as possible into the centre of the wavy circle. If that fails cast a foot or two higher up the stream. So too, after a fish has risen at your fly and missed it.

A "wet" fly early in the season, a "dry" fly later on.

Need I say that it is of the utmost importance to throw "lightly," and to take care that your "stretcher" alights on the water before your "droppers"?

> "Be mindful, aye, your fly to throw
> Light as falls the flaky snow."

The young aspirant to fly-fishing should practise assiduously and patiently, throwing his fly at a mark on a

grass-plot, and be "entered" at dace or bleak before he essays to deceive *Salmo fario*.

Try and make your artificial fly act on the water as a natural fly would act. As the poet tells you,—

> "Upon the watery surface let it glide,
> With natural motion from your hand supplied;
> Against the stream now gently let it play,
> Now in the rapid eddy float away,"

but as little "against stream" work as possible, for drawing a fly against stream causes the hackle and even feather to lie close to the body.

When a fish rises, strike quickly and decisively, and up with the point of your rod directly. And let this be a golden rule—"Keep it up" while you play your fish. If once you let the strain come straight to your winch you lose a good fish to a certainty. The only possible contingency which justifies the lowering of the point of the rod is when a fish throws himself clean out of water, as a good fish often will to the height of two feet or more. As you have a strain on him, your rod suddenly straightens when he leaps, and you must drop the point as he falls back into the water. But be *on* him again the moment he touches it.

Never let your fish see your landing-net till he is tired out, and never let it touch him till you have got it well under him.

The best time of the day for fly-fishing is as a rule from eight till noon, and from about five or six p.m. till what may be called the "evening fishing" time, at least in the summer and early autumn months. If I were asked to name the two best hours of the day I should say from nine to eleven. But of course the fish in different rivers have to a great extent different habits; and trout

in *rapid* streams are always more or less on the feed, as they have a difficulty in securing flies and other food; whereas in quiet streams and quiet parts of streams they seem to feed more regularly and at stated intervals, and rest for a time after meals. The larger the fish the more regularly he feeds and rests after feeding.

After a bright, hot summer's day evening fishing often produces good sport, and by evening fishing I mean after dusk till you can no longer see to fish comfortably. The red, and black palmer, with silver twist, the coachman, and white moth are the recognized flies for this crepuscular business. It must not be forgotten, however, that fishing after sunset is considered in most cases, *contra bonos mores.*

I might "memorandumize" on in this style *ad infinitum*, so much is there to say on fly-fishing for trout. But the style is not satisfactory to me, and it may not be to my readers, for, as I have before observed, nothing short of a treatise on the subject can satisfactorily deal with it. And even a long treatise would not exhaust it. Every river in the United Kingdom would almost require a chapter to itself. And after all said and done, the knowledge and art of the most consummate fisherman frequently avail him nothing; and to make matters worse he is utterly at a loss to account for the fish refusing to rise.

The capriciousness of trout as to rising is most extraordinary. A fisherman may begin his work under the idea that if he had had the ordering of the weather and the state of the water, he could not have ordered for the better. He makes a certainty of a full creel. But for some unaccountable reason not a fish will move! *Par parenthèse*, I am strongly of opinion that electric currents

passing through the earth affect fish more than is generally supposed. On another occasion everything seems against him to begin with, but he gets as many fish as he can carry! Let me mention a striking instance of the latter experience and of the strange caprice of trout. On an April morning some years ago a friend and myself started on foot from Wells to fish the water above the Mill not far from Wokey Hole in the Mendip Hills. It was very cold, and we had only just got out of the city when a driving snow-storm nearly blinded us. Before we got to Wokey we experienced two more, and on each occasion we debated whether it were worth while to proceed. But the storms were of brief duration, the sun was soon out again, and hope, which "springs eternal" in the angler's breast, predominated over fear. Another and worse storm just as we got to the water almost determined us to return to Wells. However, hoping against hope, we put our rods together, and began casting with "kill-devils" (double red palmers with two hooks) as stretchers and black palmers as droppers. Not a fish was moving, nor could we move one for the half-hour we whipped the water. It was now, as we thought, utterly hopeless to persevere. We would pack up and at once make tracks homewards; when suddenly another snow-storm was on us. Why I made another cast under such circumstances I hardly know, but I did, and at once a fish was securely attached to my "kill-devil." But surely it was an accident! The fish could never have intended it! It would be meaningless to cast again in a snow-storm! But before I had time to come to a conclusion, my friend had a fish on; and it was at once evident that a change had come over the spirit of the dreams of the Wokey trout. They were

rising in all directions. At what, I cannot for the life of me say, unless it were at a shower of flies which came down with the snow, or perhaps they mistook the snow-flakes for white moths! We had a fish at almost every cast, sometimes two, as long as the snow-storm lasted; but when it ceased, the fish at once ceased rising. To make a long story short, there was a succession of brief snow-storms all the day. During their continuance, the fish rose fast and furiously; in the intervals between them not a fish would rise. If I were to give the numbers of the fish we caught, I might lay myself open to the charge of exaggeration, which is sometimes brought against the angling community; suffice it to say, that never before and never since have I had a hand in catching such a dish of fish; rather I should say "dishes," for on our return to Wells almost every dish on the establishment had to be requisitioned in order that we might fully display our take. There was hardly a fish below ½ lb., the average was 1 lb., and several scaled 1½ lb. and over.

A remarkable instance, though only another out of very many I could give, of what seems the caprice of trout in rising, came under my notice when fishing the Exe about four miles above Tiverton. I had been diligently whipping from 9 a.m. to about 2 p.m., trying a variety of flies and a variety of miscellaneous devices in casting and working my cast; but not a fish had I moved, nor had I seen above half a dozen rises; when suddenly the stretch of water I was on became literally alive with fish rising. I forget the particular flies I had on my cast, but I know that the fish seemed quite indifferent as to which they took, and I basketed them almost as fast as I did the Wokey trout in the snow-storms. But in about half an

hour—*presto!* all is quiet, and not a fish is moving! Nor did the trout move again that day, though I patiently hung about the river till nightfall, hoping for another such half-hour as I had between 2 and 3 p.m. On making special inquiry afterwards of other fishermen on the river the same day, I ascertained that the same phenomenon presented itself to all of them, and as nearly as possible at the time mentioned, and that it extended along the river for at least six miles above and six miles below Tiverton. How is such a fact to be accounted for? What led to this sudden impulse, which affected the whole community of trout in a certain way along twelve miles of river for only a few minutes, so to speak, out of the whole day? Does the theory of electric currents passing through the earth or air explain it in any way? Or did a certain fly, owing to certain terrestrial and atmospheric conditions, suddenly present itself in large numbers and stimulate the quiescent appetite of the fish? I certainly noticed no such appearance of flies. Or was it a mere freak suggested by some little côterie of fish (*nescio qua dulcidine capta*) who passed the word on (as Masons do) and telegraphed up and down the stream by a kind of exercise of electro-biological power—"Let's have half-an-hour's rise at anything"? Verily "no fellah can understand" these seemingly capricious risings of trout; and perhaps the perplexed angler, if he does not wish to "vex his righteous soul" had better fall back on the philosophic oxymoron of Earl Beaconsfield to the effect that "only the unexpected is likely to happen."

One might have thought that the art of fly-fishing in its *practical* aspect would have hardly tempted the poets, though there is scope enough to hymn its delights to

the fisherman as he wanders on from stretch to stretch of some lovely river. But the poet, according to the etymology of his name, is a "maker" or "creator" (ποιητὴς), and can "make" prose into poetry and indeed anything out of nothing. Thus, then, the poet Gay :—

"You now a more delusive art must try,
And tempt their hunger with the curious fly.
To frame the little animal, provide
All the gay hues that wait on female pride:
Let Nature guide thee; sometimes golden wire
The shining bellies of the fly require;
The peacock's plumes thy tackle must not fail,
Nor the dear purchase of the sable's tail.
Each gaudy bird some slender tribute brings,
And lends the growing insect proper wings;
Silks of all colours must their aid impart,
And ev'ry fur promote the fisher's art.
So the gay lady, with expensive care,
Borrows the pride of land, of sea, and air;
Furs, pearls, and plumes the glittering thing displays,
Dazzles our eyes, and easy hearts betrays."

The poet then goes on to refer to the fisherman making his flies on the river-bank, when he finds that the stock in his book fails to attract the fish :—

"Mark well the various seasons of the year,
How the succeeding insect race appear;
In this revolving moon one colour reigns,
Which in the next the fickle trout disdains.
Oft have I seen a skilful angler try
The various colours of the treach'rous fly;
When he with fruitless pain hath skimm'd the brook,
And the coy fish rejects the skipping hook,
He shakes the boughs that on the margin grow,
Which o'er the stream a waving forest throw,
When if an insect fall (his certain guide),
He gently takes him from the whirling tide,

Examines well his form with curious eyes,
His gaudy vest, his wings, his horns, his eyes;
Then round his hook the chosen fur he winds,
And on the back a speckled feather binds:
So just the colours shine through every part,
That Nature seems to live again in Art!"

Hear, too, another piscatory poet on fly-making—the Rev. Moses Browne—mentioned in the Note on the *Literature of Fishing*.

"When artful flies the angler would prepare,
The tack of all deserves his utmost skill;
Nor verse nor prose can ever teach him well
What masters only know, and practice tell.
Yet thus at large I venture to support,
Nature best follow'd best secures the sport.
Of flies the kinds, their seasons, and their breed,
Their shapes, their hues, with nice observance heed;
Which most the trout admires and where obtain'd,
Experience best will teach you, or some friend;
For several kinds must every month supply,
So great's his passion for variety;
Nay, if new species on the streams you find,
Try, you'll acknowledge fortune amply kind."

Thomson also by no means unsuccessfully poetizes the art of fly-fishing:—

"Just in the dubious point, where with the pool
Is mix'd the trembling stream, or where it boils
Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank
Reverted plays in undulating flow,
There throw, nice judging, the delusive fly;
And as you lead it round in artful curve,
With eye attentive mark the springing game.
Straight as above the surface of the flood
They wanton rise, or urged by hunger leap,
Then fix with gentle twitch the barbed hook;
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,

And to the shelving shore slow dragging some,
With various hand proportion'd to their force."

And thus he proceeds, giving by the way good advice to fishermen who, I suppose on the principle that "little fish are sweet," do *not always* return to the river their undersized captures.

"If yet too young, and easily deceived,
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod:
Him, piteous of his youth and the short space
He has enjoy'd the vital light of heaven,
Soft disengage, and back into the stream
The speckled captive throw. But should you lure
From this dark haunt beneath the tangled roots
Of pendant tree the monarch of the brook,
Behoves you then to ply your finest art.
Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly,
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear;
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death;
With sullen plunge, at once he darts along
Deep struck, and runs out all the lengthen'd line;
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode;
And flies aloft and flounces round the pool,
Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand
That feels him still, yet to his furious course
Gives way, you now retiring, following now
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage;
Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore
You gaily drag your unresisting prize."

I have already ventured to say that "life is too short wherein to tie one's own flies." But if any one fancies to do so, he can learn much by way of book-learning from Mr. Francis and Mr. Pennell, from Ronald's *Fly-*

fisher's Entomology and Hofland's *British Angler's Manual*, and even from such unpretending works as Best's *Art of Angling* and *The Jolly Anglers*. In some of the manuals, too, diagrams will show him how to use his fingers in manipulating the different materials. Lessons, however, from an oral and digital instructor will do more for the pupil than all the books.

"Dibbing," "daping," or "dapping," with the natural fly is a recognized method of killing trout; but, as a fine art, it cannot be compared to whipping with the artificial fly. It requires, however, to insure success considerable adroitness and craftiness, to say nothing of most laborious care. An adept at this game has most of the distinctive qualities of a good angler; and, unless the fish are quite off or the locality unsuited to this method of fishing, he will seldom fail to produce a good show of fish. And, after all, to the angler, like other good sportsmen, though he does not actually "look to the pot," one of the great pleasures of a day's sport is to display to his family and friends the substantial results of his skill and patience.

As the season advances, and the water in many rivers gets very low and bright, a day's dapping is surely legitimate enough. Among the best flies for the purpose may be mentioned the May fly, the alder, the stone fly, and the "down-hill fly." This last-named, a large, flat fly, with mottled wings, is found especially on the trunks of oak trees and park palings, and always with his tail upwards; and yet does not seem to suffer from blood to the head! But really almost any fly will answer for dapping, house flies and bluebottles being perhaps as killing as any. It is not the fly, but *how you use it*, that determines your success; how you manage to secrete

yourself; how drop your line, and how work it, or, rather, let it work. You require a stiffish rod for the game. Two small flies impaled back to back often answer better than one large one.

A kind of "dapping" is the use of the "blow-line," with the natural fly. The rod for the purpose should be very long and very light, and moderately stiff, the line of the most delicate floss silk, and the foot-line of the very finest gut. You stroll along the river, and when you see a fish rise, you get the wind at your back, your rod perpendicular, and release your streamer, which should float like a gossamer in the air. When you have the fly in such a position that lowering the point of your rod would allow it to drop on the spot you wish, you lower your rod accordingly, and pray the River God to befriend you—the which he often does. Indeed, this is a very killing method with trout; so much so, that it is not allowed on many waters. I do not, however, see why it should be forbidden, for though I have said it is a very killing method, it is only so when you have a river and the wind exactly suited for it, and you yourself are a master of the art. Do not suppose for a moment that any one can manipulate a blow-line.

Akin to dapping with the natural fly is dapping with grasshoppers and a variety of other insects, more particularly with beetles. A very young frog, or one just emerging from the tadpole state, is a killing bait. Indeed, so omnivorous is the trout that it would be difficult to enumerate many living insects he would not take. In this kind of dapping, however, you often let your bait sink below the surface, and even to mid-water. No slight art is required for success in this department, and to fish very

low and clear water in this style a man must be a good fisherman. When the water is in this state it is almost indispensable that you wade and fish *up* stream. For full information on the methods of fishing briefly alluded to in the last few paragraphs, I would refer the young angler specially to Mr. Francis's *Book on Angling*, and *Trout Fishing in Rapid Streams*.

The use of the natural and artificial minnow is another recognized method for taking the common river trout; though this, again, is forbidden in many waters in consequence of its deadly effect. The summer months are best for spinning the minnow, and a trout, if at all inclined to feed, can seldom resist this bait if properly offered to him. For preference I should say use a natural minnow, i.e. if you can put it on your hooks "well and truly." It must spin very correctly on its axis, as all trout are almost as particular in this respect as the true Thames trout. Any "wobbling" is fatal to success. If you cannot carry or get carried your minnows alive in a bait-can, sprinkle them with a little salt, and pack them with bran in a box. They are more easily handled when thus treated. I do not think it matters much what form and arrangement of hooks you use, as long as you put your bait on properly. At least, this is my experience, and I have used a great variety of tackle. Mr. Francis, I notice, is very particular on this point, and strongly condemns Hawker's principle and the metal cap over the lips of the bait. I have, however, found this tackle to answer admirably. I certainly agree with him as to the use of the "Field" lead for the prevention of that bane of the spinner's sport, "kinking" of the line.

There is an infinite variety of artificial minnows. After trying very many, I find that practically the old "Archi-

medean" horn minnow is as good as any, and with this I will couple the plano-convex minnows of Mr. Hearder, which have the advantages of spinning without turning the hooks at the same time.

In minnow fishing *always* fish *up* stream; spin to your right and left alternately when you can wade up the middle of the water; and draw your bait obliquely down stream. Spin, too, at one regular pace, neither increasing or diminishing your speed when a fish runs at you. Contrary to the opinion held by Mr. Francis, I do not think it necessary to "strike" the fish when he strikes you. Simply, draw on.

I would advise a special rod to be used for minnow fishing, long and light, and fairly lissome, but varying somewhat, according to the nature of your stream and the size of fish you expect to catch. In small rivers, where fish do not often reach a pound in weight, your fly rod, if it is one of the "stiff" or medium stiff class, will answer the purpose; but perhaps it is better to have a minnow top for use when required.

Worm-fishing for trout is another deadly method, and among the forbidden pleasures on most waters. But there is worm-fishing and worm-fishing. When the water is discoloured, and the run of a river is specially adapted for this work, the most ordinary of anglers can let the stream wash his worm into likely places, and he is almost certain to take fish. But it is a very different matter when the water is low and clear, and fly-fishing hopeless. Then he must fish *up* stream, and use the finest of tackle, and that most artistically. And he must be very particular as to the kind of worm he uses. The poet again gives him directions, even on this prosaic matter:—

"You must not every worm promiscuous use,
Judgment will tell thee proper baits to choose;
The worm that draws a long, immod'rate size
The trout abhors, and the rank morsel flies;
And if too small, the naked fraud's in sight,
And fear forbids, while hunger does invite.
Those baits will best reward the fisher's pains
Whose polish'd tails a shining yellow stains;
Cleanse them from filth, to give a tempting gloss,
Cherish the sullied reptile race with moss;
Amid the verdant bed they twine, they toil,
And from their bodies wipe their native soil."

I think Gay must mean the "brandling" by "the rank morsel." The best worm for a trout is the "marsh" worm or a well-scoured, succulent "lob." Not the gamey, odoriferous "brandling," loved of the voracious perch and tench. A trout turns up, or rather away, his nose at the very smell of it. He no more fancies a meal of these offspring of the manure heap than an alderman does a dinner of plain biscuits. At least this is my experience, and I must confess I am somewhat surprised at Mr. Francis and other authorities recommending the "brandling" as a trout worm. A friend of mine recently told me that he once had the opportunity of throwing a fine "brandling" before the nose of a splendid trout of some 3 or 4 lbs., who, with many others of his fellows, were roving just beneath the surface of a lake, seeking what they might devour. The fish at once dashed at the wriggling morsel open-mouthed, but hardly had his teeth closed on it than he ejected the mangled mass fully a foot through the water, and evinced such evident tokens of disgust as fully demonstrated that a "brandling" was not to his taste.

Here, then, I must leave the minnow and worm-fishing

for trout. At the best, they are not to be compared with fly-fishing :—

"The minnow in summer its monsters will kill,
And the worm loads the pannier, when nothing else will;
But give me the spring-time, the light-dropping hackle,
And the masterly cast, with the finest of tackle."

I do not wonder that the poets prefer fly-fishing to worm-fishing. Says one,—

"Around the steel no tortured worm shall twine,
No blood of living insect stain the line;
Let me, less cruel, cast the feather'd hook
With pliant rod athwart the pebbled brook;
Silent along the mazy margin stray,
And with the fur-wrought fly delude the prey."

And another, after an invitation to fly-fishing, says,—

"But let not on thy hook the tortured worm
Convulsive twist in agonizing folds,
Which by rapacious hunger swallow'd deep,
Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast
Of the weak, helpless, uncomplaining wretch,
Harsh pain and horror to the trembling hand."

Their preference for fly-fishing is reasonable enough, but it never seems to have struck these worthy songsters that, as a matter of inhumanity, it must be as cruel to impale a trout as to impale a worm.

Thus the trout is taken by a greater variety of methods and a greater variety of baits than any fish that swims.

But not a word on "cross-fishing," or the use of salmon roe. Let not these things be hardly as much as named among us.

And yet a jotting on "tickling" trout. I have read of trout being tickled, heard of it from scores of persons,

and seen many attempt the operation; but I never yet saw a trout brought out of water in the human hand after tickling. There is most respectable authority of ancient date for trout-tickling, and the belief in the tradition and possibility of performing the operation is almost universal. In Beaumont and Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, Act ii., occurs the following:—

> "He is mine own, I have him;
> I told thee I would *tickle* him like a trout."

And we read, in the *Haven of Health*, published in 1636, concerning the trout,—

> "This fish by nature loveth flattery, for being in the water it will suffer itself to be handled, coaxed, and led astray, whose example I would wish us maidens not to follow, lest they repent after."

Bunyan, too, in his *Apology for his Book*, doubtless alluding to trout, says,—

> "Yet fish there be that neither hook nor line,
> Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine;
> They must be groped for, and be *tickled* too,
> Or they will not be catch'd, whate'er they do."

How can I doubt, then, but that trout are tickled? And yet I do—for that most illogical and unreasonable of all reasons, viz. the fact that I never saw one tickled, and never met a person who plainly declared that he himself had tickled and so caught one. Putting salt on the tails of birds is a most excellent device for catching these shy creatures, but the difficulty is to apply the salt. So doubtless tickling is an admirable way of beguiling trout; but do they *really* allow themselves to be tickled?

My last jotting *re* trout is gastronomical. In the *Haven of Health* (1636) we read that—

"A troute is so sound in nourishing that when we would say in English a man is thoroughly sound, we use to say that he was as sound as a troute."

Izaak Walton says,—

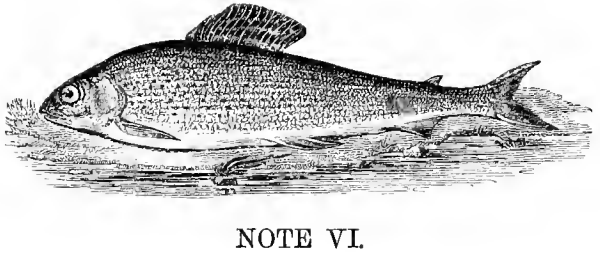
"It is a fish highly valued in this and foreign nations. He may be justly said, as the old poet said of wine, and we English say of venison, to be a generous fish—a fish that is so like the buck, that he also has his seasons; for it is observed that he comes in and goes out of season with the stag and buck. . . . He may justly contend with all fresh-water fish, as the mullet may with all sea-fish, for precedency and daintiness of taste, and being in right season the most dainty palates have allowed precedency to him."

I have already said that a real Thames trout is as good as the best of salmon, and better than a great many. The Colne trout, his first cousin, is but little if at all inferior to him; and the trout of some few other waters are almost equally good in texture of flesh and flavour. But, generally speaking, as trout vary in form and colouring in different rivers, so do they vary in the quality of their meat. Some cook crisp and eat most sweet, while others are soppy and almost as muddy in flavour as a pond roach or bream, or are simply tasteless. There is no fish from either fresh or salt water that varies so much in a gastronomic point of view as a trout.

The recipes for cooking a trout are almost as numerous as the varieties of the fish itself. Our forefathers, whatever we may say of their "simple" ways, were seldom contented to eat their fish *au naturel*, but directed their cooks to prepare them with such numerous ingredients for stuffing, cooking, "serving," and sauce, that the wonder is they

could collect them in a working day. Old Thomas Barker (1657) gives us some of these laborious instructions for dealing with trout, and is followed by other writers who exercise a vast amount of misplaced ingenuity in this direction. Would it be believed that the aforesaid Barker actually gives directions for the making of trout pie, "hot" and "cold"? A trout should not be subjected to indignity in cooking! It is all very well to endeavour to disguise a *bad* fish by the assistance of the Mageiric Art, but why disguise a *good* one? We do not try to disguise salmon, though we eat lobster sauce and cucumber with him; and indeed it was a "happy thought" of the man who first hit on the latter as an accompaniment of the royal fish. Why then disguise *good* trout? A good *big* trout is best simply boiled, or cut into cutlets and simply broiled; and he will be all the better for having been "crimped" (as Sir Humphrey Davy recommends) like salmon and cod. A good *small* trout is best broiled whole, either split open or not, and eaten with a little plain butter, pepper, and salt. If he is not worth eating then, he is not worth eating at all.

Here endeth the trout; and I must leave it to my readers to accept the apology already tendered for not having attempted to deal with him more fully and systematically.



NOTE VI.

THE GRAYLING.

(*Salmo Thymallus, or Thymallus Vulgaris.*)

"*Effugieus oculis celeri Umbra natatu.*"—AUSONIUS.

"*And here and there a Grayling.*"—TENNYSON.

"*Trout and Grailing to rise are so willing.*"
The Angler's Ballad.—COTTON.

HERE is another member of the numerous salmon family, as distinguished by the second back fin, soft, flabby, and without rays. The *Thymallus* of Ælian was probably our grayling. This distinctive name of the grayling was given him in consequence of the smell of "thyme" which the fish is said to emit when first taken from the water. The association of this odour with the grayling dates very far back. Walton speaks of it, and says that some persons think the fish feed on water thyme, and so smell of it; "and they may think so with as good reason," he adds, "as we do that our smelts smell like violets at their being first caught, which I think is a truth." He also refers us much further back, viz. to the time of St. Ambrose, "the glorious Bishop of Milan, who lived when the Church kept fasting days, who calls him the 'flower-fish' or 'flower of fishes,' and was so far in love with him that he would not let him pass without the

honour of a long discourse." But many persons utterly fail to distinguish this *thymy* fragrance about the fish, while some detect the smell of cucumber; but others, again, recognize neither one nor the other. There is certainly some subtle odorous emanation from the body of a fresh-caught *Thymallus*, but I think it is an effort of the imagination to connect it with any definite known scent. It is a fragrance, and I am not quite sure a very pleasant one, for to my nose a grayling, notwithstanding the thyme and cucumber, has a decidedly "fish-like" smell. At the same time, however, I do not wish that what may perhaps be a want of a nice olfactory discrimination on my part should tend to rob the fish of his thymy association or his pretty classical name.

But why called "grayling"? It is said by some, from the *gray* or grayish "lateral line" along him; by others, from "the longitudinal dusky blue bars" which mark the body; and by others, again, because of the bluish-gray colour of the fish generally. Certainly the grayling is a *gray* fish in a greater degree than any other fish can be said to be *gray*. There is an idea of grayness predominating, taking the fish as a whole; the Latin *cinereus*, "ash-coloured" or "ashy-gray," being perhaps as near as we can get in chromatic description. The old name for the badger was the "gray," i.e. the *gray* quadruped *par excellence*; in like manner the grayling may be considered the *gray* fish *par excellence*. And yet I have a secret doubt whether the colour "gray" has anything to do with the name of our fish at all, and question whether we must not search for some root, *gr* or *gra*, to account for his nomenclature.

A more ancient name of the grayling was the *umber*,

i. e. *umbra* (shadow). Thus he is the "shadow-fish," and pretty enough name also, and said to be given him, according to Hippolito Salivani, an Italian physician of the sixteenth century, in his *De Piscibus, cum eorum figuris*, "from his swift swimming, or gliding out of sight more like a *shadow* or a ghost than a fish." The grayling, when in wait for flies, does not lie near the surface of the water like the trout, but several feet below it; and his habit of darting up at his prey, and descending again as rapidly and almost perpendicularly, by the aid of his enormous dorsal fin, is certainly suggestive of a fish which "fleeth as it were a *shadow*." But it would almost seem that we are not to be allowed to enjoy this explanation of "umber" in peace, for Cotton says he is "apt to conclude" that the grayling has this name from the black i. e. *shadowy* spots on his belly, and the black colour about his head, gills, and back when he is out of season. Cotton, however, is a little out in his facts here, for in reality the *darker* the fish, especially upon the back and head, the better condition he is in.

It is by no means an easy thing to describe the grayling as to his form and colouring, so as to bring the fish before the mind's eye. This is how one modern angling author limns him:—

"Its colouring, when in fine condition and just taken from the water, is most lovely. The back is of a deep purple or claret colour, with, small dark, irregular spots on the sides; the belly is brilliantly white, and the dorsal fin, which is remarkably large—almost disproportionately so—is covered with scarlet spots and wavy lines upon a ground of reddish-brown. The little velvet-looking back fin near the tail is also dark brown or purple, and the whole body is shot with violet, copper, and blue reflections when seen in different lights."

This is the painting by another brush:—

"A general tint, which may be called a light blue, silvery gray, pervades nearly the whole surface of his body, excepting the belly, which is white or nearly so; but the scales often exhibit iridescent hues of great beauty. The back and head are of a much darker gray, but its components cannot, perhaps, be described verbally. Some lines of brown are intermixed with the gray of the sides, and a few black spots are seen near the shoulder. The back fin has a purplish tint, studded with large dark spots; the other fins are not so red as those of the trout, but have more yellow-brown in them shaded off with purple. The tail is a kind of slate colour."

If you wish to appreciate the delicate tinting and "shot" colouring of a grayling hold him horizontally before you. He is most exquisitely painted, though the colouring is all subdued.

He is an elegantly-formed fish, though I will not go as far as Mr. Ronalds and say, "more elegantly formed even than the trout." One of the authors just above quoted, comparing the two fish, says, "The trout has, so to speak, a Herculean cast of beauty; the grayling rather that of Apollo—light, delicate, and gracefully symmetrical," and Mr. Francis says, "If the trout be the *gentleman* of the streams, the grayling is certainly the *lady*." This is not bad; but though the trout is generally of a heavier build than the grayling, he is not less "gracefully symmetrical." The grayling has a smaller head and mouth than the trout, and tapers more towards the tail; but as a set-off against these elegances and graces he has broader shoulders; while what may be called his "lozenge-shaped" eye gives him an unpleasant or even sinister expression.

While, however, I fully admit that the grayling is a graceful and symmetrical fish, I cannot divest myself of an idea which always presents itself to my mind whenever I contemplate one. It is that, somehow or other, he is a

nondescript kind of fish. If I may say so without irreverence, he seems to have been turned out of hand before it was clearly determined what definite form he should ultimately assume. To my eye he is in shape suggestive of the barbel, especially as to his somewhat "Roman nose," and also of the dace as to his elongated body and "silveriness," while his back fin, which *looks* as if it were "spinous," suggests that he was originally intended to be a member of the perch family.

The very extreme weight of a grayling in our waters may be put at 5 lbs., one scaling this weight having been recorded as taken near Shrewsbury some years ago. A 4 lb. fish very seldom falls to the angler's lot; and therefore Mr. T. L. Parker's three grayling taken in the Avon near Ringwood, which together weighed 12 lbs., will for ever be handed down in piscatorial annals. As a rule, the fly-fisher for grayling must be contented with a very occasional two-pounder, with a few pounders, and an average of half-pounders, I mean taking together the result of two or three seasons on different rivers. It is the smaller fish which rise most freely at the fly, the leviathans feeding mainly on animal supplies in the depths below or the more substantial "waifs and strays" of midwater.

Doggerel rhymes or the more sober prose memoranda of history generally supply us with the authors and date of the introduction into this country of various commodities animate and inanimate. The monks who

> "Made gude kail
> On Fridays when they fasted,"

have the credit for importing the grayling into our waters; but it may be doubtful whether they are entitled

to it, and the statement in support of it to the effect that grayling are only found in streams on which monasteries once stood is not as a matter of fact correct. Nor again would it have been very easy to have brought such a very delicately-constitutioned fish from the Continent. We shall, therefore, probably be correct in assuming that the grayling, like the trout, is indigenous to this country.

The fact that they are not so widely distributed in the United Kingdom as trout does not really militate against this assumption. There is no fish so particular as to the kind of water it delights in, or whose well-being and increase is so affected thereby. There are no grayling in Ireland or Scotland, except in the Clyde, where they have been introduced. They are found, however, in the Orkney Isles. Wales, also, is graylingless, except in the "border" rivers, unless the few exceptions which from time to time have been noted prove the rule. They have their land, or perhaps I should say their water marks, and like certain birds are not found beyond certain lines of longitude and latitude even in the circumscribed area of this "tight little island."

"Est quadam prodire tenus, sed non datur ultra."

The nightingale never crosses westward the boundaries of Devonshire; the grayling will not pass into Somersetshire. His most loved waters are those of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Herefordshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Cumberland, and yet by no means *all* waters in these counties. Compared with the ubiquitous trout we find only

"*Here* and *there* a grayling."

The best grayling rivors are the Test, the Ichen, the (Hampshire) Avon, the Lugg and its tributary the Arrow,

the Teme, the Dove, the Derwent, and the Wharfe; but anglers are naturally inclined to uphold those waters in which they have met with the best sport. Without offence, however, it may be said that though the Teme grayling is the best specimen of his race, the fishing of the Lugg bears off the palm.

The geological formation of the beds of rivers, which of course affects the quantity and quality of fish diet to be obtained, and the character of the "run" of the river itself, determine to a very great extent the suitability of the water for grayling. They do not like continuously rapid streams, or rocky, chalky, or sandy bottoms, but marl and loam combined with gravel—"happy mixtures"—and streams along which sharp stickles are succeeded at frequent intervals by long, quiet channels and deep pools.

As an instance of the partiality of grayling for one water and their dislike of another, I may mention a fact of a very striking character which came under my own observation. A friend and myself were enjoying a week's fly-fishing on the waters of the Pembroke property round Wilton, and in the river which ran north of the town (the Wylie, if I remember rightly) we took many grayling, while in the river which ran south (the Nadder) we took nothing but trout; but in the water below the junction of the two rivers outside the park in the direction of Salisbury, we took both trout and grayling. We noticed the fact, and on inquiry learnt that not a single grayling was ever found in the Nadder, though they were fairly plentiful immediately after its junction with the Wylie.

The success of attempts to introduce grayling into

rivers, where they are not "naturally" found, is very dubious. In some few instances the experiment of acclimatization has answered well; in the majority it has been a failure, though, as far as our limited knowledge goes, the water experimented on satisfied all the supposed requirements of the fish. A large number of stock fish were put into the Thames some years ago by Mr. Warburton, and the Thames Angling Preservation Society has also endeavoured to bring the grayling nearer to London anglers, but it is evident that neither attempt has yielded substantial results, though "here and there," and at long intervals a disconsolate *Thymallus* is picked up "promiscuously" by a Thames angler, and each one is more and more likely to be "the last of the Mohicans." I have also among my fishing memoranda one to the effect that in 1864 nearly 1500 grayling fry were put into the Lea about three miles above Hertford. I have often made inquiries about these grayling, but have never yet been able to "hear of something to their advantage." Grayling will "hold on" for some years in water they do not like, for instance in a newly-made pond of stagnant water, but they will not "increase and multiply" unless they are perfectly satisfied with their location and surroundings. Still there can be little doubt but that grayling could be successfully naturalized in many rivers which do not now hold them.

On the Continent this fish is widely distributed, from Lapland, where it is most abundant, to the "great toe" of Italy; but the same capriciousness, if we may so call it, as to its choice of water is observable as in this country.

The "Habits and Customs" of the grayling are in-

teresting. They spawn in April or the beginning of May, depositing their roe amongst gravel at the tails of swift currents. They are more gregarious than many other fish, much more so than trout. They show a disposition to a kind of migration, appearing first in one part and then in another part of a river in greater abundance, and they have a general tendency to drop gradually *down* a river. Unlike their relatives of the *Salmonidæ* family they seldom jump out of water, and evince no wish to surmount natural or artificial obstructions, for I suppose the very good reason that they could not if they would. General observation and experience leads to the conclusion that as a rule trout and grayling do not thrive well together in the same water, the trout getting the worst of the partnership and decreasing in numbers as well as deteriorating in quality. This is very noticeable in some of our best grayling waters. Some persons say that grayling are a very pugnacious fish, and really worry and harass the trout. They are bottom feeders to a much greater extent than trout, but unlike the trout will come up through many feet of water to take a fly. The tenderness of their mouths is another characteristic of grayling. Almost the only bait which a grayling will not take of those which a trout will is the minnow, though Izaak Walton has a note to the contrary. A grayling is a less timid and wary fish than the trout.

"Pink" is a local name given to fish one year old, "shot" or "shut" to fish of two. As "pinks" they have neither lateral lines visible nor spots. As "shot" they have spots, but the longitudinal lines are but faintly discernible. Grayling do not spawn till their third year.

Grayling do not take flies so early in the year as trout

do in some rivers, but in March and April they rise more freely than perhaps in any other months, and a tyro can take them then in large quantities, especially the smaller fish. But as they are more or less out of season during the spring and summer months, July is quite early enough to fish for them, when generally speaking trouting is becoming slack. Till then, good angler, return to the water the fish you may hap to take! The proper grayling season may be said to be from August to December inclusive, and it is not unfair to take them even in January. Thus the fly fisherman can pursue his delicate pastime all the year round, as the early trout, especially in Devonshire, may be fished for as soon as February sets in. As the winter comes on, the middle hours of the day are the best for grayling fishing with fly, and when the sun is shining between eleven and two you may have capital sport in mid-December. Sir Humphrey, who treats most excellently on the grayling and grayling fishing, is not to be followed when he says that the sport may be pursued at *all* times of the year.

Put roughly—the flies that kill trout kill grayling, and the same rules are to be observed in both branches of fly-fishing. The various kinds of duns, and spinners, the willow, the sedge or cinnamon fly, May flies, partridge and woodcock hackles, and in winter black or pale gnats, are all good; but fishermen should not despise the "local" flies, such, for instance, as the Derbyshire "bumble." Mr. Pennell of course maintains that his three typical trout flies, yellow, green, and brown, are all that are required. As a rule your flies should all be made on a smaller scale for grayling than for trout, and your gut finer. Indeed you cannot fish too finely for grayling.

But though undoubtedly fishing *up* stream for trout is the most artistic and killing method, it is not so in the case of grayling. Mr. Francis's directions on this point are worth transcribing:—

"As, *more particularly in deepish water*, he has to rise from some depth, you should not hurry the fly in casting, but make your cast rather drag. For this reason, fishing up stream and drawing down is not the best method of fishing, because you do not give the fish time; and all experienced grayling-fishers cast directly across stream, as close as possible to the opposite bank, where the best fish of course lie, and let it drag slowly round down stream, bringing it round by so directing the point of the rod even to their own bank. In bringing the fly round slowly like this it will often become submerged, and the grayling, rising quietly under water, will take the fly without being seen, and reject it speedily. Many rises will thus be lost, and these are often the best fish. To avoid this, the angler should give a short twitch or strike at everything in the least suspicious that may lead him to infer that a fish has risen. A dimple or curl in the water where no eddy exists, or stoppage of the line in its downward course, &c. &c., should instantly be attended to, and very often the angler will be rewarded for his keenness."

Among other *Nota-benes* for the grayling fly-fisher are —Strike as quickly as possible; remembering the tender mouth of your fish, strike as lightly as possible, with a gentle turn of the wrist; play him as delicately as possible. Always carry a landing-net, and never attempt to "weigh out" a grayling by the line. Let your fly frequently float down stream, and sometimes sink towards the bottom. If a fish rises and you miss him or he misses you, cast over him a second and a third time, and indeed *many* times, for a grayling has a habit of making many attempts to secure his object. You may often see a fish take your fly just below the surface of the water without "breaking" the surface;

keep a sharp look out for this, and strike instantaneously. The tails of deep pools are the best spots for big grayling, but be content with moderate-sized fish, for the big fish are not often taken with the fly.

Grayling may be taken by dapping, and by most of the insects natural and artificial used for trout at the top, in the middle, or at the bottom of the water; but the "grasshopper" practice is now the most popular because the most efficacious, especially for taking the largest fish. It is an artificial bait, and called the "grasshopper;" I suppose, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, because it is *not* like a grasshopper in the faintest degree. It is more like a caterpillar, but not much like that. It is simply a "wadge" of various-coloured wool about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in length bound round the shank of a hook, and made to taper towards the tail. At the tail, i. e. on the bend of the hook, you elaborate a bunch of gentles—as many almost as you can get on—till the point of the hook is almost covered. You use a moderately stout gut bottom and small piece of quill, a quasi-float, to guide your eye as to the depth of your bait, and a fairly stiff rod. Your "Grasshopper" you work on what is called the "sinking and drawing" principle, i. e. you let it down till it touches the bottom, and then keep raising it about a foot and letting it sink again; the stream, which must not be too rapid, gently carrying your bait a little further on each time. The bait thus "hops," and it has just struck me that the inventor of it and the style of fishing might have originally called it a "hopper," and that some one afterwards added the "grass" in mere ignorance or for the sake of euphony (?). Anyhow it is most slaughtering tackle in the autumn and winter months.

Grayling may also be caught by ordinary methods of bottom-fishing, especially with gentles as a bait and ground-bait; but the "Nottingham" style is to be preferred. "Whipping" with gentles is also a recognized method. But who would endeavour or care to snare grayling with "grasshoppers," gentles, worms, or any of the whole tribe of grayling baits, when there is a reasonable prospect of success with the artificial fly?

Here is a quaintly-worded little morsel *re* grayling by Mr. Franks:—

"The umber, or grayling, is an amorous fish that loves his life; his mouth waters after every wasp, as his fins flutter after every fly; for, if it be but a fly, or the produce of an insect, out of a generous curiosity, be is ready to entertain it. Smooth and swift streams enamour him, but not a torrent; yet, for this fly-admirer, there is another bait—the munket or sea-green grub, generated amongst owlder trees, also issues from willows, sallow, &c. Fish him finely, for he loves curiosity, neat and slender tackle, and lady-like. You must touch him gently, for he is tender about the chaps; a brandling will entice him from the bottom, and a gilt-tail will invite him ashore."

And now, when we have hooked your grayling, what sport does he give us? It is strange how anglers differ on this point, as I do not fancy the sportiveness of grayling in one river differs much from the sportiveness of those in another. Going back to an ancient and good practical authority, Cotton, we find him recording his experience to the effect that the grayling "is one of the deadest-hearted fish in the world; and the bigger he is the more easily taken;" but Mr. Senior, a well-known angler and author on fishing, says, "He is not by any means the chicken-hearted brute described by Cotton." Mr. Pennell, on the same side, says, "Whilst yielding to its sister species, the trout, in the qualities of dash and obstinate

courage, the grayling is yet a sturdy and mettlesome fish—a foeman worthy of our steel." Mr. Ronalds quotes Bainbridge, and evidently agrees with him: "Most writers in treating of this fish have stated that it struggles but for a very short time, and is, therefore, productive of little diversion, but the contrary is not unfrequently the case;" and further Mr. Ronalds says, "He is an excellent fish for sport." Mr. Francis speaks disparagingly of grayling, thus: "Though now and then one will fight boldly and well, too often they behave as a trout might be imagined to do if he had been drinking success to the May fly rather too freely."

Here, then, is a pretty good mixture of opinion. My own feeling and experience is that he is but a "moderate" fighter, not to be compared with the trout or the barbel, or (if it is lawful *parvis componere magna*), for his size, the tiny gudgeon. He makes a few strongish dashes which remind me of the action of the bream when first hooked, but, as a rule, he soon gives up the struggle; while sometimes it pleases him to hang almost like a dead weight on your line, or rather like an eel, to pull backwards, i. e. tail first.

A good day's grayling fishing is, however, one of the most enjoyable day's fishing we can have.

No little difference of opinion again exists on the edible virtues of *Salmo thymallus*. As grayling do not vary to any great extent in their form and colouring in different rivers, so there is no very great difference in their flavour. They are all "much of a muchness," be that muchness good, bad, or indifferent. St. Ambrose, it is evident from what has been recorded of him, considered a grayling prime eating for "miserable sinners;" and Father

Sanctus called the fish a "queen of delight." Walton reminds us that Gesner says "that in his country, which is Switzerland, he is accounted the choicest of all fish;" that in Italy, in the month of May, he was so highly valued as to be sold at a much higher rate than any fish; and that the French so prized him as to say that he was fed on gold. Cotton says that he is a "winter fish,"—

"But," he adds, "such a one as would deceive any but such as know him very well indeed; for his flesh, even in his worst season, is so firm, and will so easily calver, that in plain truth he is very good meat at all times; but in his perfect season, which, by the way, none but an overgrown grayling will ever be, I think him so good a fish as to be little inferior to the best trout that ever I tasted in my life."

Cotton is only partly right in his remarks; for though perhaps a grayling is never *absolutely* out of season, yet without doubt he improves in flavour and in texture of flesh as the autumn passes into winter, and deteriorates as the winter passes into spring. The orthodox angler will not fish for him till August, and the educated *gourmand*, your *gourmet*, will not eat him till October. It is in this month and November that the best of grayling, the Teme grayling, is in his primest condition, which he calls attention to by the deep purple colour of his back, by the black spots on his sides, by the spotless whiteness of his belly fringed with gold, and by his rich purple-tinted fins. However plump (and he is *always* plump), and fat, he may seem to the eye, and however well he may handle, in the summer months, these are not his "season." He is really but little better then than our common "coarse" fish. He comes in with the pheasant. And when he does come in, I shall briefly sum up my

own private gastronomic views of him to the effect that he is not to be compared with any fairly good trout, though I willingly acquit him of that "muddiness" which so distastefully attaches more or less to most of our fresh-water fish.

Walton says that "all that write of the Umber declare him very medicinable," and quotes Gesner as an authority to the effect that the fat of the fish, "being set, with a little honey, a day or two in the sun, in a little glass, is very excellent against redness or swarthiness, or anything that breeds in the eyes." Here is a hint for ladies.

I shall never forget "my first grayling," though I record his capture to my shame. In the days of "hot youth, when Plancus was consul," two friends and myself, taking advantage of the few days' Whitsuntide vacation at Oxford, determined on a visit to Winchester for fly-fishing. We arrived at the old cathedral city on the Saturday evening, "with hopes high burning" of the sport which was in store for us on the Monday, and eventually went to bed and enjoyed blissful visions of any numbers of speckled four-pounders attaching themselves to "apple-greens" and other cunningly-devised flies from the hand of Mr. Pottle. Of course, as decent young Churchmen and Christians, it was taken for granted on Sunday morning among us that we would go to the cathedral service at eleven. But one of the party did *not* go. It had been whispered in his ear by an evil spirit, more irresistible than any which beset and were discomfited by "the good St. Anthony," that it was a pity to lose Sunday without casting a fly, especially as the biggest fish were always taken on that day, according to a very old tradition. He forthwith began to make

excuse for not going to the cathedral, and he went not. But, contrariwise, when his friends were safely within the old Norman fane, he sallied forth with a cast of flies in his hat, and his rod let down between the lining and epidermis of his semi-greatcoat, through a slit made for the occasion. Holding his trusty "Chevallier" in position as a poacher does his unjointed gun, with his hand in the outside pocket, he sallied forth, with feelings akin to those which a tender-hearted young cracksman, not yet hardened to his work, may be supposed to entertain when starting on his first "job" with all the paraphernalia of his calling carefully secreted about his person.

He stole timidly away from the hotel, not without a fear that the "boots," or chambermaid, or the most respectable landlady (if she had not gone to some "place of worship") had "spotted him." Down the main street, and then to the left down a bye street (this was a partial relief); but he felt that everybody he met had a suspicion of him, and there were more people looking out of windows with upbraiding eyes than he thought could possibly be at home on the Sabbath. At last he is in the meadows, and eventually on a tow-path, as it seemed, and he breathes a little more freely as he sees several sauntering Sabbath-breakers dotted along it. Yet he has half a mind to relinquish his object; but a voice whispers in his ear that there is no very great harm, now that he could not get to church, in having a cast or two. Well, it should only be one or two, and then he could get back in time for the sermon! With difficulty the rod is got out of its hiding-place, with haste put together, and he is ready for the first throw. The flies, however, get in a tangle, and catch in the skirt of his coat. He will break them off;—cut the whole

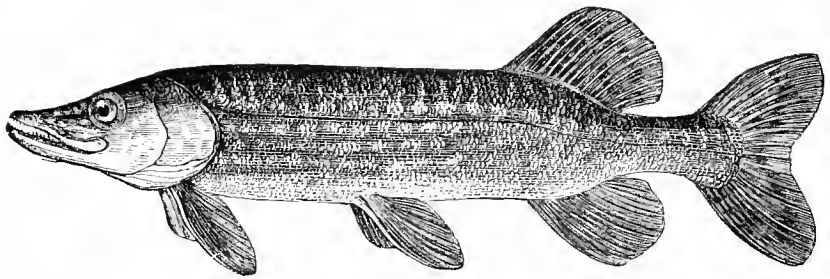
thing away;—it is a judgment! No; all is right again; the "die" as well as the line is cast!

A rise at once. A fish hooked! A fish landed! A two-pound fish! What is it? He had never dreamt of a grayling, but a grayling it is. He knows it, though he had never seen one before. It is in his pocket safe and sound. But a hundred people, at least, have been watching the proceeding. For to this number had a bad conscience magnified a listless tramp and two small boys. He cannot endure it. He is known. His friends will hear of it. The very cathedral seems moving across the meadows to him—the cathedral under one of the flag-stones of which he remembers that the bones of old Isaak Walton are lying. He has done an evil deed. He will back again and make atonement. Eugene Aram was a happy man and quite at his ease compared to *him*. The people will be coming out of cathedral, church, and "places of worship." He runs back to the hotel as if for dear life, though sadly impeded by the grayling, which *will* get between his legs as the deep pocket of his coat swaggles about; and the hidden rod works in all directions, as if it were mischievously determined to impede him. At last he is back at the hotel, and he has run the gauntlet of the boots, chambermaids, waiters, and the landlady herself. The grayling is wrapped up in a changed under garment, and stowed away at the bottom of a capacious carpet-bag, which is carefully locked. He cannot tell his friends what is the matter with him, in answer to their inquiries. Not a word as to the little but most painful episode as it turned out. They know nothing of it to this day, and unless they come across this little book, they never will.

Years have passed by, but I shall never forget "my

first grayling." I have slain hundreds of good fish since, and remember more or less the circumstances of each capture, but not one is so indelibly photographed on my mind as this.

The best writers to be consulted on the grayling are Cotton, Sir Humphrey Davy, Ronalds, and Francis; and as I notice that angling authors of repute refer constantly to Mr. H. Wheatley's *Rod and Line*, there can be no doubt but that his book is worth the attention of those who want to know "all about grayling," though I confess I have never seen it.



NOTE VII.

THE JACK.

(*Esox Lucius.*)

"*Go on, my Muse, next let thy numbers speak*
That mighty Nimrod *of the streams, the* Pike."
The Innocent Epicure (1697).

"*And Pikes, the tyrants of the watery plains.*"—POPE.

"*The Pike, or lucit, is a mercenary;*
Or anglers seem among themselves to vary;
He loves no streams, but hugs the silent deeps,
And eats all hours, and yet no house he keeps."
THEOPHILUS FRANCK.

Esox Lucius, the British "Pike" or "Jack," is a typical representative of the *Esocidæ* family, and is the only member of it which comes within the scope of these Notes. *Esox lucius*—a "fish of *character*," and one too the very look and sound of whose classical name is suggestive of voracity and ferocity.

If you look out "Pike" in a dictionary or in a "Natural History of Fishes," you will find some such technical description as this:—"PIKE (*Esox lucius*), so called from the shape of his head and jaws; head depressed, large,

oblong, blunt; jaws, palatine bones and vomer, furnished with teeth of various sizes; body elongated, rounded on the back; sides compressed, covered with scales; dorsal fin placed far back over the anal fin; whole body mottled with white, yellow, and green." His general beauty, for beauty he has, may be more enthusiastically enlarged upon. A baby jack of a few inches is really "pretty." I look on a jack in good season as a handsomely marked fish, though of villainous aspect. His formidable teeth and wicked eyes are sufficient to inspire any amount of terrible description in poetic vein. A Dante would need hardly a more terrible looking creature for his pen, or a Doré for his pencil, i.e. as far as a head goes, which might be fitted to any monster, *informe, ingens,* with his teeth strong and sharp, a very phalanx of bristling "pikes," and, let it be noticed, all pointing inwards and downwards thoracically. "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum*" would be a fit inscription for the portals of those wide, opening jaws; or "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." And his eyes! Writers on "Natural History for the Young" would tell us that a kind Providence has provided the jack with eyes on the top of his head, so that, by looking upwards, he may be better able to provide for his living by seeing his prey as they swim over him. Quite so; but many writers on natural history in this vein would say nothing about the effect of this admirable arrangement of a kindly Providence as affecting the jack's prey. I should like to know what the roach, bleak, dace, &c., think of it. I should imagine that they must long ago have come to the conclusion that the "arrangement" is very conducive to the destruction of themselves and other innocent fishes. To equalize matters, fish which swim high in the

water should have eyes in their bellies. The gudgeon, however, should not complain, for as they seldom quit the very bottom of a stream, they must generally escape the raids of the jack, unless these astute fish, when inclined for a very toothsome morsel, sometimes swim on their backs, and thus are enabled to pick up the gudgeon from the lowest depths. I call them "astute" fish because Mr. Grantley Berkeley, an ardent observer of nature, insists on showing us that jack have "reason" as well as instinct—a view he illustrates in his recent work, *Fact against Fiction*, by the account of a jack which had fed pretty freely on young ducklings, and when at last the remnant were wired off from the pond, persistently watched the coop and enclosure, his "reason" telling him that he might expect a wanderer from the fold to make its way into his domain. However, he did not "reason" about the wire, it strikes me.

Our *Esox lucius* has no great antiquity to boast of, as far as books and written documents inform us. I will not discuss with Messrs. Darwin, Huxley, and Co., whether he swam in the rivers of Paradise or in streams which existed a trifling number of millions of centuries before Adam gave names to all fish, flesh, and fowl, or whether he came into being through a "fortuitous concourse of atoms," or by a process of "natural selection," or by the law of "the survival of the fittest;" nor with the upholders of "Spontaneous Generation," whether pike were originally developed from "pickerel-weed," as eels are said to be evolved from stray pieces of horsehair which find their way into the water. Certain it is that the ancient Greeks, the observant and all-knowing Aristotle included, were not acquainted with *Esox lucius* such as we know

him now. The suggestion that the sacred *Oxyrhynchus* (sharp nose) of the Nile was the true ancestor of our pike will hardly wash, as Ælian's oxyrhynchus "came up from the sea," and his sharp-pointed beak hardly answers to the "broad, patulous, anserine mouth-piece" of the *Esox* of modern anglers. Nor can we identify our *Esox* with Pliny's *Esox*, which attained the weight of 1000 lbs., unless there has been a sad deterioration of race during the degenerating ages. Indeed, as a learned ichthyologist informs us, the first appearance of *our Esox*, in either poetry or prose, cannot be put before the fourth century of the Christian era, when the Latin poet Ausonius sings of him as,—

> "The wary Luce, 'midst wrack and rushes hid,
> The scourge and terror of the scaly brood,"

which is a free translation of

> "Lucius obscuras ulvâ limoque lacunas
> Obsidet,"

a passage which, by the way, I notice is very incorrectly quoted by Dr. Badham, Mr. Pennell, and other writers on fish and fishing. He is now a very widely distributed fish in British waters, but we have only one species.

It has been gravely held by some that the word *Lucius* —"luce"—is from the Latin *luceo*, to "shine," and applied to our *Esox* because of certain phosphorescent properties he displays in the dark. But unfortunately for this etymology he has *no* phosphorescent properties; and we can hardly suppose he was called the "shiner" on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, because he does *not* shine. There can be little or no doubt about *Lucius* being merely

the Greek λύκος (*lukos*), "a wolf." And what better or more significant title could the fish have? He is, indeed, the "wolf-fish." The title is an illustrious one. There was a Roman emperor, Lucius Verus, the "original" Lucius, and long after him a Pope Lucius, whose character may be surmised from the following lines quoted by Dr. Badham:—

> "Lucius est piscis, rex atque tyrannus aquarum,
> A quo discordat Lucius iste parum."

In English heraldry no fish was so early borne as the pike; it occurs in the arms of the Lucy, or Lucie, family as far back as the reign of Henry II.

But if "Lucius" is an etymological difficulty, "jack" and "pike" are still more so. Of course, as Dr. Badham says, it is suggested at once that the word "pike" is derived from the French *pique*, and that the fish is so called because his snout is sharp and pointed like a "pike:" but really a pike's snout is *not* pointed like the beard of Shakespeare's "piked man," but "broad, patulous, and anserine." The French names are easier of explanation; *brochet* is evidently derived from the spit-like shape of the body; *lance, lanceron* from the speed with which a jack hurls himself on his prey; and *becquet*, as suggested by his anserine or duck-like muzzle. Richardson, in his dictionary, says that the "pike" is so called from the likeness of its nose to a pike or spear, or "because it moves itself in the water like a spear thrown;" as, in like manner, he says, "jack" is so called "from 'jaculum,' because like a javelin in shape or motion." The difficulty, I think, may be arranged on this wise:—the muzzle of a jack *is* "broad, patulous, and anserine" when

looked *down* upon from above; but the *profile* of the head and snout, i. e. when looked at *sideways*, is quite sufficiently "piked" as to justify his English title of "pike," or "jack," i. e. "javelin-fish," from "jaculum," a dart-head. And here let me say that in this Note I shall use the terms "jack" and "pike" indiscriminately, as the old distinction of a fish under 5 lbs. being called a "jack," and a fish over that weight a "pike," seems to have gradually been given up. "Jack" is the name now most in use.

Query.—Is it possible that the "serried pikes" in his mouth—his teeth—are the origin of his name?

It is hardly necessary, either for the purpose of airing my own knowledge or adding to that of my readers, to say that our fresh-water shark, like other far more innocent fish, derives his being from the hatching of ova; but it may not be known to all that the spawn is deposited from the end of February to the end of March, or even to the end of April, according to the state of the weather and the water, and also according to the age of the pikesses, the youthful fish spawning earlier and the dowagers, or "frog" pikes later in the season, when frogs are active in perpetuating their race. Old Isaak Walton, our patron saint, somewhat quaintly describes the spawning operations. Unfortunately a tendency to seek ditches and creeks in the spawning season is the cause of capture by poachers to scores of jacks and jackesses, particularly along the Thames; but it may be hoped that before long the Thames Conservancy, the Thames Angling Preservation Society, and the District Angling Associations, aided by riparian owners and tenants of adjoining land, may be able *entirely* to put down the nefarious practice, which they

have already done much to limit; unless that small, and I think very inconsiderate body of persons, who would clear the Thames of the jack altogether, carry the day. Perhaps such a clearance could never be thoroughly effected; but an organized and sustained raid on the jack in the ditches and creeks during spawning time would go far towards it. Let it be noted, by the way, to the credit of our lady and gentlemen jack, that they have no Mormonite tendencies. Monogamy is the law of their community, though I will not say it is never broken. It was this tendency to pair that helped me to capture a fine brace of jack early one February, about twenty years ago, in the river at Cranford. I was jack fishing in the lake in Earl Fitzhardinge's park (where, through the kind intercession of my old friend, the Rev. Heathfield Weston Hickes, the rector of the parish, I have had many a good day's fishing), and had left a paternoster for perch baited with gudgeon in the sluggish stream just above the small bridge. On my return from a walk round, trolling, I found I had to encounter a fine jack which had attached herself to the paternostor, and after no little trouble I landed my fish, which scaled over 14 lbs. In the same manner, and exactly at the same spot, just a week afterwards, I took another—the gentleman fish this time—weighing 13 lbs. I have no doubt but that these were an engaged, or rather married pair, just at the commencement of their honeymoon, and that after the cruel (I have often thought since it was very cruel) capture of his bride, the bridegroom disconsolate hung about the spot, and so came also to a miserable end within a few days of the decease of his wife.

Passing on from this piteous case of early dissolution of

marriage, and hoping that these jack who were so lovely but unhappy in their lives, and whose stuffed skins still make them look lifelike in glass cases, are happily swimming Elysian lakes in another and better world of waters, I will make a few jottings as to the growth of jack from their babyhood and the size they attain. The authorities tell us that a baby jack grows to the length of 8 in. or 10 in. in his first year; that he increases by 12 in. to 14 in. in his second, and by 18 in. to 20 in. in his third, or, to put it in another way, that a jack increases in weight at the rate of 4 lbs. per annum during the earlier portion of his life; but that after twelve years he diminishes each year by 1 lb. to 2 lbs., and lessens still more as age advances. These calculations are all very well in their way, but only approximately true; for a jack's growth depends on a variety of circumstances—such as the extent and quality of the water he lives in, the number of his fellows that tenant it jointly with him, and the supply of food; and I am also inclined to think partly on the infusion of "fresh blood" into a race inhabiting any particular water. To the want of fresh blood I am disposed to attribute the fact that even in such a magnificent lake as Virginia Water the average of jack run very small. I once put half a dozen jack, of about 3 lbs. each, into a garden pond with clay bottom and containing but little food for them. In five years I could see no perceptible increase in these jack.

As to the size a jack may attain it is difficult to speak. There are several historical pike of prodigious dimensions; for instance, the well-known giant captured in 1497 A.D. in the vicinity of Manheim, which, like the story of Anthony and Cleopatra's fishing, is supposed to be mentioned in every book on angling. To one of the gills of this

fish was found a suspended medal with the following announcement in Greek:—"I am the first fish that was put into this pond by the hands of the Governor of the Universe, Frederic the Second, on this 5th day of October, 1232." In the two centuries and a half during which he had witnessed and survived so many social and political changes, he had "laid on" 350lbs., and he measured 19ft. If he had decreased in weight during his declining years according to the calculations given just above, what must he have once weighed in the "bloom of youth and beauty!" Even taking him at his weight on his demise—

> "A fish like this, one single foot to raise,
> Would take twelve men of these degenerate days;
> A brace of heroes from the Trojan war
> United scarce might lift it on the car."

His skeleton is, or is said to be, still in the Manheim Museum; but those who have seen it say that it has evidently been tampered with. Fortunately for angling heroes of the present day, no such fish tenant British waters, otherwise it would be necessary to bait with a whole sheep, a swan, or a living porker, and play your fish on a sort of Trotman's anchor by the aid of a chain cable and movable crane, as we should the *Silurus glanis* (one of the *Esocidæ* family), if, as was suggested a few years ago, he were acclimatized in our lakes and rivers.

In the Thames jack do not run very large, and it is only occasionally that one over 20lbs. is taken. The Henley and Marlow districts occasionally produce a jack between 20lbs. and 30lbs. In Norfolk grand fish are often taken of 30lbs. and more; and in Scotch, and particularly in Irish waters, of a still greater weight, fish between 40lbs.

and 50 lbs. occasionally finding record; while still more occasional monsters of over 70 lbs. have been satisfactorily vouched for. In England, however, a fish of 20 lbs. to 25 lbs. must be considered a "topper." I doubt whether half a dozen of this weight are taken in a year. The 35 lb. fish taken in one of the Windsor Park lakes in the autumn of 1874 well deserved going the round of the papers as the "Monster Pike." His stuffed skin, and also a cast of him, were exhibited at the Piscatorial Exhibition at the Westminster Aquarium in 1877. An angler in English waters should always be well contented with a 10 lb. fish.

Who can describe and do full justice to the voracity and "omnivoracity" of this "solitary, melancholy, and bold fish," as Walton calls him? It makes one almost shudder even to read how, "shrouded from observation in his solitary retreat, he follows with his eye the shoals of fish that wander heedlessly along; he marks the water-rat swimming to his burrow, the ducklings paddling among the water-weeds, the dab-chick and the moor-hen swimming leisurely on the surface; he selects his victim, and, like the tiger springing from the jungle, he rushes forth, seldom missing his aim." A long *catena* of traditions has been handed down on this point and on that of his powers of digestion;—and such traditions lose nothing by repetition! Nor need they; for our simple English jack, in his quiet sort of way, may safely bear a relative comparison to the shark for his voracity, and to an ostrich for his powers of assimilation. What will he not take is rather the question than what he will. It is said that he declines sticklebacks, though it is well known that unwary pickerels often get choked by them. Perhaps if not choked completely in his infancy, he gets wiser after

what Dr. Badham calls an attack of "sticklebackitis," as he advances to pikehood. He is said also to abjure perch, knowing well the dangerous quality of their dorsal spinous fin. I doubt it; for at Slapton Lea, in Devonshire, I have killed scores of jack with a perch both spinning and live baiting, because no other bait than the perch from the water can be got there; though I admit I cut off the threatening fin. Still a Slapton jack can hardly have the credit for knowing I did this in the case of a gyrating spinning bait, which produces the same ocular deception as a spectroscope; though perhaps in the case of a live bait he may have seen that the perch was one which had been bereft of his "un-downward" tendency if swallowed tail first. And really, putting myself into the same condition of mind as an "astute" jack, who swallows head first, I can see no objection to a perch, as his spinous fin would fold up—or "back" in this case—like a lady's fan if the perch were swallowed head—i.e. handle—first. It is said also that a jack will not touch a toad though he dearly loves a frog, and that he turns from tench, either loathing their slime or from an instinctive knowledge that he can be cured of wounds and of other ailments by "touch of tenches," as Camden affirms and our Izaak Walton endorses, when he says that "the tench is the physician of fishes, for the pike especially, who forbears to devour him, be he never so hungry." Let us give the unmentionable one his due. No sane man would wish to devour his doctor; and if there is a loathsome creature on earth it is the toad, notwithstanding the "jewel" in his head. I will give the jack, therefore, though not without considerable hesitation, credit for good feeling and good taste in these two respects, but in none other. He would take a pincushion stuck full

of pins, or a young porcupine or full-grown hedgehog, if only presented to him artistically, and atmospheric and electrical influences were conducive to hunger. He may have his predilections for certain *bonnes bouches*, such as young ducklings, plump puppies just opening their eyes, tender kittens that are not wanted in this world, and, as a pikish historian relates, for a "Polish damsel's foot"—why not for an English damsel's, and thus show his better taste, and include the ankles also? But in reality nothing comes amiss to him. He has no more taste, in the true sense of the word, than he has feeling. "All's fish," at least food, "that comes into *his* net."

"True glutton-like his stomach rules his eyes."

Certainly when left to his natural devices he is the sort of gentleman who would eat the toast on which asparagus is placed to drain, the tin foil in which Rochefort cheese is enwrapped, the crust of a game pie, or the envelopment of an Oxford brawn. I had the curiosity to open the 14 lb. jack I caught at Cranford as above mentioned, and I found in her the *semi-digesta moles* of a moor-hen, two water-rats, a bream of about two pounds, innumerable smaller fishes, and a variety of other "foreign substances." *Ex uno disce omnes.* It is on record that the body of a child was once found in the belly of a pike. The only wonder is how he can manage to live at all in certain waters. The truth is that the same kindly Providence which has placed his eyes on the top of his head has also endowed him with the power of long fasting, which doubtless he often exercises, either from necessity or choice. If he did not, I am inclined to think that not a living or dead thing would be found in his haunts, and that he would devour and

assimilate the very banks of his aqueous home. His ferocity is almost on a par with his voracity, and there are many stories, quite worthy of credit, of his attacking persons bathing, and animals which have come to drink in the water. He may not "bark," though "Mr. Briggs," of immortal memory, says he does; but he certainly can "bite" with very great effect. Woe betide the hand he gets within his jaws and operates on with his horrible canine teeth! Have a care when you are disengaging hooks from his mouth. He "snaps" at you as viciously as a melancholy-mad dog. How marvellous his powers of digestion! He needs no "patent pepsine" to assist him. It is said, and I believe said truly, that the jack has a larger supply of gastric juice, and that of a more active quality, than any other creature. When five years old, an authority tells us, a jack will eat every fortnight his own weight in gudgeons or other fish. His powers of assimilation must therefore be first class. He can digest the tackle he is caught with as well as the bait. He can dissolve a cork float or the lead of a gorge-hook with ease. I believe he could dispose of a trimmer or ginger-beer bottle or a corkscrew without much difficulty, and digest the hardest books ever written, *Butler's Analogy*, to wit, or *Locke on the Human Understanding*, or even a deed of conveyance drawn up by the longest-winded attorney alive. Once, however, I saw a jack thoroughly puzzled. In Wilton Park the head keeper took me to see a jack of about 8 lbs. in a stew (in two senses of the word), with another of about 3 lbs. partly down his gullet. He told me that the fish had been in difficulties two days, but that the three-pounder was gradually going down. On the following day it had disappeared, with the exception of about

an inch of the tail. But, after all, this is a reflection rather on the swallowing capacity of the jack than on his digestive powers.

Jack, however, have got themselves into greater difficulties than the foregoing. In Mr. Buckland's Fish Museum at South Kensington may be seen the coloured cast of two jack, together weighing 19 lbs., and nearly of the same size. The head of one up to the termination of the gills is firmly fixed in the throat of the other. They were gaffed by a boatman on Lock Tay when struggling together locked in each other's jaws, and were sent to Mr. Buckland without being separated. Whether this painful *contretemps* was brought about by a charge at one another when fighting, or by their both charging at the same bait at the same moment, or whether one of them, suffering from some ocular delusion at the time really "ope'd his ponderous jaws," with intent to swallow the other, cannot be determined; at all events, whether "lovely" or ugly "in their lives," "in death they were not divided."

Longevity is certainly a characteristic of jack; and Bacon is probably not far out when he says they are the longest-lived of all fish, and gives them a lease of forty years. They are, too, very tenacious of life. I remember catching an 8 lb. jack at Brocket Hall one morning, and gave him, as I thought, his quietus by a sound rap on the head, but he was alive in my basket when I took him out in the evening. I then gave him a succession of raps, and laid him "for dead" on a cold slab in the larder. He was alive, however, the next morning!

Our jack was probably the fish which first engaged the

attention of English anglers; or at least, as the old works on angling show, they paid special attention to his capture; "trolling" with the dead gorge bait on a leaded hook, more or less as we troll now, and live-baiting being the methods of fishing in vogue. Dame Juliana Berners thus instructeth:—

"Take a codlynge hoke, and take a roche or a fresh heeryng, and a wyre with an hole in the ende, and put it in at the mouth, and out at the taylle, down by the ridge of the fresshe heeryng; and thenne put the hoke in after, and drawe the hoke into the cheke of the freshe heeryng; then put a plumhe of lead upon your lyne a yarde longe from your hoke, and a flote in mid waye betwene; and caste it in a pytte where the pyke usyth, and this is the best and moost surest crafte of takynge the pyke. Another manere of takynge him there is; take a frosshe [frog] and put in on your hoke, at the necke, betwene the skynne and the body, on the backe half, and put on a flote a yerde therefro, and caste it where the pyke hauntyth, and ye shall have hym. Another manere: take the same hayte, and put it in assafetida, and caste it in the water wyth a corde and a corke, and ye shall not fayl of hym."

Thus we see that Walton was not the first to recommend a frog as a good bait for a jack, though his well-known directions for putting it tenderly on the hook "as though you loved him," will be remembered when Dame Juliana Berners is forgotten.

Angling was a roughish kind of business in the good dame's times, and long afterwards, but refined enough for the fish "of the period." Trolling made progress, and Nobbes, though as I have remarked at page 48, not deserving the name of the "Father of Trolling," in his *Complete Troller* in 1682, disseminated sounder views in this department of jack-fishing. Since these various improvements have been made, and for those who care to fish for jack before the weeds are down, a day's

trolling is a fair piscatorial amusement; and as they walk along the river banks or shore of stagnant water, trying the likely places, they may flatter themselves that etymologically "trolling" and "strolling" are one and the same word, as indeed some etymologists aver, making it out to be fishing as you "stroll;" albeit there is little doubt of the fact that "troll," as applied to fishing, is the same as the German *trollen* (Dutch *drollen*), to "draw," from the Latin *volvere*, and first cousin to "roll;" and thus your dead gorge is the "drawn," "rolling" bait.

Spinning is certainly the most artistic form of jack-fishing, and for this I prefer Mr. Pennell's tackle, with its large tail hook and flying triangle, or triangles, to any other. For "snap" fishing I also like his hook arrangement, but not so well; for with all due deference to such an authority, his theory of the "hanging" triangle is based upon the assumption that the bait swims horizontally, whereas, more often than not, notwithstanding the lead, it is struggling in an upward or downward position. Moreover, the bait is very likely to be torn off the hook in casting. I must say that, taking all things into consideration, I like a single lip hook and a triangle, one hook of which is inserted in the belly or beneath the dorsal fin of the bait. The great objection to gorge-baiting, with either a live or dead bait, is that it involves almost every fish taken, large or small, being killed. Moreover, it involves a great loss of time in waiting for the fish to pouch, and then, after a delay of from ten to twenty minutes, there is the constant disappointment at finding the jack has rejected or only been playing with the bait, or that no jack took it at all. "Never hurry a jack, Tom," was the advice of the old gentleman in *Punch*

to the youthful angler at his side. The picture showed the hook of the bait fast in a log of wood at the bottom of the river. Of course, a first-rate fisherman generally knows when a fish has "struck," and when *he* has struck some subaqueous impediment; and if he is in any doubt he can generally, by a slight *tentative* tightening of the line, tell whether a fish has his bait or not;—but not to every angler is given that sensitive faculty. As a somewhat idle fisherman, I rather like live-bait gorge-fishing, but when fish are well "on" the "snap" style is the best sport, and requires much more piscatorial science.

As regards the best time of the year and the best weather for jack-fishing, I must humbly say that I am at variance with most authorities. It is generally said that November and December are the best months; I think February, at least the early part of it. If, however, I had the power of making "fence" months for jack, I would make it illegal to take one between the festivals of St. Valentine and St. Partridge. It is generally said that cloudy, cold days and rough water are most conducive to good sport. I prefer *rather* bright, warm, and even still days. I quite admit I may be wrong, but my experience is my voucher for so saying, my best days' sport for many years having been had on comparatively warm, bright, and still days. A fisherman who essays to use pen, ink, and paper ought always to record his own *experience*. What *everybody* says is *not* always true as regards sport; for instance, about "a southerly wind and a cloudy sky" proclaiming the hunting morn. In the Pytchley and some other countries a touch of north wind improves the scent.

One word as to the frame of mind of a jack when he takes a spinning or a live bait. Though there has been

much discussion on this point, I have no doubt myself it is because he thinks that the fish is in difficulties of some kind or other, and so will be an easier prey. I believe a jack with all his cleverness, activity, and greediness, has often very hard work to earn an honest livelihood by capturing live food, and the older he gets the more his difficulties increase. The dace and roach and chub are too quick for him. When, therefore, he sees a bait "wobbling," as if in difficulties, or spinning round as if seized with vertigo, I take it he says to himself, "Here's a chance," and forthwith avails himself of it, with a result often more satisfactory to the angler than himself.

Though particularly fond of jack-fishing, I do not look on *Esox lucius* as a sporting fish of the first class. He will not compare with the trout, and is any number of degrees behind a barbel. It is true of almost all fish that they do not show an increase of strength or determination to resist capture in proportion to their weight and size. This is particularly the case with jack, as far as my experience goes. A jack of from four to seven pounds will, as a rule, show as much sport as one of ten to fifteen; and really when they are above eight pounds or so they are very tame when hooked, and allow themselves to be dragged almost like a mere log through the water. I remember a particular instance of this at Cranford. My live bait had been taken, and after giving the fish the usual law for pouching I began to haul in. I felt something very heavy on my line, but there was no rush or struggle. I at once came to the conclusion that the fish had neglected the bait, and that the hook had got foul of a sunken hurdle or large branch of a tree. I hauled away very gingerly, and when I had got in about thirty yards

of line I knew that the "attachment" was close to the bank; and indeed it was in the shape of a grand fish, at least 20 lbs. in weight, with another jack of about 3 lbs., which had already pouched my bait, in his mouth. I had him within three yards of the bank, and we looked steadfastly at each other, his wicked eyes having a sort of inquiring look, as much as to ask me what I intended to do. I answered by taking my landing-net, to which he responded by quietly dropping the 3 lb. jack, and sailing quietly off in the clear, still water of the lake. I plead guilty to great indiscretion in the matter, as he had the 3 lb. jack merely crosswise in his mouth. Directly I saw the situation I should very quietly have dropped my rod or gradually retired, giving him what line he wanted and a good quarter of an hour to gorge. However, I did not; and I only mention the incident as illustrating the sluggishness of big jack, of which I have had many instances, when they have been fairly hooked. For a sportive fish of his class commend me to one of about 5 lbs. or 6 lbs. in the Thames—an educated fish, as all Thames fish are—or in some swift stream. Such an one shows fair sport enough, especially if you are fishing "fine," and not in the clothes-prop-and-line way of business.

Alas! that there should not be more good jack-fishing to be got in England than is *now* the case. I say in "England," because of the multitude of English anglers, more or less of a humble kind, who cannot afford either the time or money to get to Scotland or Ireland. As angling has become more and more popular, good fishing, and especially good jack-fishing, has become more difficult to obtain every year. In "open" rivers jack have been woefully thinned down, or become very crafty, at least the

big jack. Very seldom now, except in strictly "private" waters, can a good take of jack be had. And many of these "private" waters are well-nigh worked out, for be it remembered that, according to some law of nature, a certain area of water will only hold a certain number of jack, and that not a very large number. You may soon practically clear of its jack a bit of water, say of from one to twelve acres.

A rare bit of sport piscatorial is a good day's jack-fishing in "private" and "preserved" water, where Tom, Dick, and Harry cannot "get a day" by merely asking for it,—in some quiet park, almost under the windows of "the big house." I have had a few such days—not many —"to be marked with white chalk." Here is a brief record of one:—

It boots not to indicate the exact *locale*, for if mentioned the owner of the water in question would have at least a hundred letters by the next post, begging a day's fishing. It is a greater trouble and more prolific source of inquiries and petitions to be the proprietor of a good bit of fishing than to be the owner of a Derby favourite. Suffice it then to say that the destination of a friend and myself was a fine expanse of water in a gentleman's park "within one hundred miles" of London. Byron described it exactly when limning Lord Henry's home and estate:—

"Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wild-fowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed;
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood,
With their green faces fix'd upon the flood."

Green, of course, in summer, but brown enough and bare enough when we went a-fishing. A most jacky lake; the haunt of monster *Esocidæ*, and well stocked, too, with giant perch. We are on the spot betimes, having come down to the decaying little country town hard by the overnight. The day is favourable atmospherically, not a cold day, but a moderately mild one, as I have already said I prefer for jack-fishing. Good sport is anticipated as a certainty, and the result justified the hope. A huge boat receives us and our *impedimenta*, rods and tackle, solids and liquids for the inward man, and cans of bait for the jack, fine lively Colne gudgeon and dace which we had duly oxygenated on the road down. One takes his place in the bow, the other in the stern, the keeper with the oars in the centre, and hard by him a friend of the anglers, my brother, who had come to see the fun; one of that strange but cheery tribe which, though thoroughly imbued with the love of sport, prefers to handle the landing-net to the rod, and to riding after a shooting party to carrying a gun, regaling itself at intervals, during the September day on blackberries, hedge-nuts, and short pipes. The boat is moored in deepish water, facing an island, and the work commences. Live baiting with snap-tackle (Pennell's pattern) to begin with; and the first bait no sooner in the water than a jack has made too intimate an acquaintance with the pendant triangle. Before he is in the landing-net another is on the other rod, and soon both are safely in the boat. My enthusiastic brother, who is provided with a steelyard, suspends the fish, and records on a card, with which he had thoughtfully provided himself, their weight, $4\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. and 3 lbs. He has assigned himself the office of the "recording

angel" for the day. The fun at once assumes the "fast and furious" style. It is a day when the jack are "on." A 8-pounder, a 4-pounder, and other pounders yield to the skill of man and their own appetites in quick succession, but for the first two hours an 8-pounder is the biggest fish. At last, attached to "the fatal thread," is one, evidently a monster, to be judged so, however, not so much from his dash as from his heavy, dogged resistance. He must be humoured, for the tackle is comparatively fine, and he bores towards the other line, and before it could be got out of the way he is hopelessly entangled with it, and so becomes, as it were, the captured of both rods. The original one, however, of course deals with him, the other angler letting go and reeling in his line as circumstances required; and after about an anxious ten minutes or "bad quarter of an hour," at least for him, he is safe in the boat—a fine, shapely, well-conditioned fish of 15 lbs.; a very *rex atque tyrannus aquarum.* He is scored to my rod after a slight suggestion that honours should be divided; and, to the credit of both anglers let it be recorded, no attempt was made to perpetuate the old joke of a "union jack," which is invariably served up when a fish, as is often the case, takes the baits on both lines, and the verdict fairly is "half is mine and half is thine." Visions at once arise of 20, 25, and 30-pounders to follow, for such there are in the water, but the visions are not realized; indeed, the capture of the big fish seemed to have the effect of making the tribe, for some time at least, like "grey shirtings and mule twist" are sometimes described in mercantile language, "quiet."

But the jack market is soon buoyant again, and after some "small fry," ranging between 3 lbs. and 5 lbs., had

been captured, a 6 lb. fish takes his last bait, and later on a 10-pounder "bit gimp," and exchanged his watery home for the flooring of the boat. *Et jam vesper*, &c., and the winter's day was drawing to a close. The shore is reached, and the spoil is counted, which showed twenty-nine fish, all told, and a $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. perch. The twenty-nine fish weighed exactly 1cwt., with $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. over. All under 3 lbs. were returned to the water, to grow and "fight again another day." My brother angler, who, perchance, will see this brief record of our day at ——, will not be hurt at my saying that the four biggest fish fell to my rod; and as he has the 15-pounder in a case at his home now, he should be satisfied at the ultimate result. Strung on a pole, with a piece of cord through their gills, the reserved fish were carried by the keeper and a rustic of the district through the neighbouring town in a kind of triumphal procession, and to our hostelry, where a grand tureen of soup, comprising every known vegetable, apparently every kind of meat in junks, and crusts of bread and toast—meat, drink, and clothing combined—recuperated the anglers and the man of the steelyards and weight record. I should like to immortalize the name of the inn and its landlord for this excellent soup, but in doing so I might be giving to the curious a clue to the name of the water where we had our day's fishing. An offering was despatched to the squire, another to the steward, another to the village parson, the squire's brother, another to the village doctor; and the landlord of the inn was not forgotten. The balance arrived safely with the anglers in London, who, though ardent fishermen, were too wise gastronomically to eat of the produce of their rods. They were contented with the sport.

This record of a day's jack-fishing, does not, of course, pretend to be anything very extraordinary. Many better days have been had and are had occasionally, though very many worse. Not long ago was enjoyed a day's fishing in "private" waters by a sporting Billingsgate salesman and a friend. They killed eight jack, weighing 78 lbs., the largest scaling 11 lbs., and thus showing an average of nearly 10 lbs. each. Since then two gentlemen took 2 cwts. of jack in a well-known bit of water, near Luton; while Mr. Francis has put on record 3 cwts. as the result of a day's "jacking" executed by himself and a friend. But few and far between are such days now, or anything like them. Fishermen have so increased in number of late years, and every inch of water which can be got at by hook or by crook is so "hunted to death," that were it not for strictly "private" waters, and stern proprietors who will only give very special friends a day just now and then, jack-fishing, or at lest jack-catching, would be in danger of becoming a sport of the past.

By the way I must note here a curious fact concerning the partiality of the fish at ——, for a certain bait. We had brought with us for our day's fishing just mentioned some splendid gudgeon and dace; but we found by experiment that the —— jack preferred the small, ill-conditioned roach of the water, which were covered with black scabs, probably some parasite. Perhaps these gave the bait some *piquant* flavour; but however this may be, the fact of the jack preferring them to our daiuty bait is contrary to the experience of almost every jack-fisher, who knows that a *new* bait to a stagnant water jack is especially provocative of his appetite.

By way of a few miscellaneous jottings on jack-fishing—

Fish fine, as jack, are not fools. Use stained gimp; but strong gut-traces are to be preferred to gimp. A dace is the best bait both for spinning and live-baiting, as, judging from an observation in Shakespeare's Henry IV., it was supposed to be generations ago. Spin slowly. The angling-books say also, spin at a uniform pace; but my own experience leads me to recommend short "sweeps" or "drags" (not *jerks*) from the point of the rod, letting your rod go back towards the bait after each "sweep," and gathering in your line a couple of yards or so for another. I think the style is more suggestive to the jack of a *fish in difficulties* than the continuous drawing of the line by the hand with the rod almost stationary. When in spinning, or snap-like baiting, your fish strikes you, you cannot return the compliment too quickly and hardly too sharply; and it is more important in jack-fishing than in any other branch of the art, that your line should never be slack for a moment when you have a fish on. Remember the bony palate of your capture, and the way he has of energetically shaking his head, in order to get rid of the hooks. A killing way of jack-fishing is the "dragging" of (what may be called) a paternoster through deep water, with one or two baits hooked through the lip about a foot and a foot and a half above the lead. This is pre-eminently a Thames style, and I believe of comparatively recent adoption. Artificial baits do not succeed in many waters, though they answer well in some; a curious fact, to account for which it is impossible. "Spoon" baits, in "Phantom-Eel" and Hearder's "Plano-convex" baits, are among the best I know. Jack may be taken with large gaudy flies, especially during hot August and September days. Almost any kind of salmon fly will answer

the purpose, and the body should be made "fatter." It should be worked with a series of "jumps" or "bobs," over beds of weeds, and allowed to sink a few inches below the surface.

In live-baiting, use a perforated "bung," and stop it slightly enough with the peg for the line to run through it when a jack drags it into weeds. This prevents his feeling a check, which often suggests to him to let go the bait.

Shall I dare to say a word about "Trimmering" for jack? I did so dare not long ago in the pages of a daily paper, and the editor was inundated with letters protesting against his allowing his columns to be used for the advocacy of such an unfishermanlike proceeding. But *really* I did *not* advocate trimmering. I only spoke of it as an amusement and a "bit of fun," which might be had resort to under occasional and exceptional circumstances; for instance, when the owner of some jack-water wants the stock thinned down, or determines to have a morning's entertainment in witnessing the result of a series of well-laid trimmers, just as another man may take delight in witnessing torpedo experiments.

I certainly can take no great blame, if any, to myself, in having accepted one day last jack season the invitation of a friend, who had a grand piece of jack-water as full of fish as "a cage is full of birds," and begged of me to superintend a trimmering raid, which he had determined to carry out, whether I had a hand in it or not. A fair stock of baits were prepared, roach, dace, gudgeon, and small jack, the latter being an excellent lure, for jack eat jack as "dog eats dog." Various were the trimmers brought into requisition, for, as angling (trimmering) readers know, there are other kinds of trimmers used

besides the orthodox trimmers—also called "man-of-war" trimmers—red one side and white the other. It is, I suppose, from the fact of their changing sides and colour when a fish takes the bait, and thus accommodating themselves to circumstances, that they are called "trimmers." The boat was rowed to the windward shore of the lake, as trimmers travel, though slowly, in the direction of the wind; and then commenced the baiting of the hooks and the planting of the "engines" at intervals all along the shore some ten yards or so from the land. There were the "tell-tale" trimmers already mentioned; trimmers in the shape of claret-bottles for floats (not any kind of bottle, but claret-bottles, for these will float longitudinally when properly "trimmed" with water, and the spare line of the trimmer wound round their necks will unreel when a jack runs the bait); and trimmers with bullocks' bladders. A few "bank-runners," which are a kind of trimmer, especially when a leger lead and cork beyond it are used, making the fishing a cross between night-lining and ordinary gorge live-baiting, were also set. So, too, were a few bough trimmers—that is, trimmers in shape of letter Y without any horizontal finishing lines. These are simple but clever contrivances. The letter Y is formed by any ordinary bit of wood, which is bifurcated. Round the bifurcated part the line is wound, and "nicked" in a slit in one of the arms. The stem of the Y is tied by a separate piece of string to a bough overhanging the water, and when a jack runs the bait, the line slips out of the split arm and runs off the bifurcation quickly enough not to check the fish. This is a very killing method of trimmering, and seems to have been known to Isaac Walton. Beyond this we did not experiment, nor did we care to

have recourse to the rough-and-ready style known on the Norfolk Broads as "liggering," or "trimming," which, though very inartistic, the float being a mere dry bunch of weeds or rushes, has slain its tens of thousands of fish, and helped to deplete these once happy (and yet it is to be hoped, by the aid of modern legislation, to be again happy) hunting-grounds of the angler. About fifty to sixty trimmers in all were laid and left to the consideration of the jack, who are certainly more nocturnal in their habits than most fish. The morning was anxiously awaited, and at last came. There can be no doubt about the *fun* of searching for and taking up the trimmers, the expectation, the anticipation, the chasing, hauling in, and basketing of the fish. The bank and bough trimmers were first visited and found to have done their duty well, but the others required some finding. Some of the bladders had evidently collapsed; but on one was certainly a good fish, for as the boat, with the keeper rowing in the centre, neared it, the jack evidently felt alarmed and dashed away, pulling the bladder under water from time to time. Nearly twenty minutes were consumed in the chase, and at last the bladder came into contact with a floating branch, got pricked, and our hopes of a grand fish were dissipated, like the bladder, into thin air. There was a somewhat similar hunt after a claret-bottle, which eventuated in the landing of a 12 lb. fish. Some of the bottles and orthodox trimmers, however, had disappeared altogether, doubtless drawn down into the weedy depths by the jack when they had come to the end of their tether. About ten could not be found; on about ten more there were no fish, the gimp of some having been bitten through, or the bait of some rejected after it had

been taken. On twenty were jack of some kind, great or small, and on one a grand perch nearly 4 lb. in weight. This may suffice as to the net result of the day's—or rather night's—trimmering; but let it be added that it is not every one, even if he had the best-stocked lake in England put at his disposal, can do a bit of trimmering successfully. There is a right and a wrong way of going about this, as about everything else. Trimmering is even a science, and not every one's work. Moreover, it is not every one who knows how to play a jack on a trimmer, as the arm, and, indeed, whole body has to be worked scientifically when a big fish is hooked. Such a fish is very easily lost by clumsiness and ungentle handling.

Trimmering was a method of jack-fishing recognized by our forefathers and foremothers, and even a cruel form of it was considered "sport." Dame Juliana, immediately after the passage above quoted on "live-bait" fishing, adds,—

"And if ye lyst to have a good sporte, thenne tye the corde to a gose fote, and ye shall have a gode halyngne, whether the gose or the pyke shall have the better."

Old Barker, in his *Delight*, tells us that—

"The principal sport to take a pike is to take a goose or gander, or duck; take one of the pike lines, tie the line under the left wing, and over the right wing, about the body, as a man weareth his belt; turn the goose off into the pond where the pikes are; there is no doubt of sport, with great pleasure, betwixt the goose and the pike; it is the greatest sport and pleasure that a noble gentleman in Shropshire doth give his friends entertainment with."

Here is the account of a tussle witnessed many years ago between a gander and a pike:—

"A farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, kept a gander, who not only had a great trick of wandering himself, but also delighted in piloting forth his cackling harem to weary themselves in circumnavigating their native lake, or in straying amid forbidden fields on the opposite shore. Wishing to check this vagrant habit, he one day seized the gander as he was about to spring into the pure breast of his native element, and, tying a large fish-hook to his leg, to which was attached part of a dead frog, he suffered him to proceed upon his voyage of discovery. As had been anticipated, this bait soon caught the eye of a greedy pike, which, swallowing the deadly hook, not only arrested the progress of the astonished gander, but forced him to perform half a dozen somersaults on the face of the water! For some time the struggle was most amusing, the fish pulling and the bird screaming with all its might, the one attempting to fly and the other attempting to swim from the invisible enemy; the gander the one moment losing, and the next regaining his centre of gravity, and casting between whiles many a rueful look at his snow-white fleet of geese and goslings, who cackled out their sympathy for their afflicted commodore. At length victory declared in favour of the feathered angler, who, bearing away for the nearest shore, landed on the smooth green grass one of the finest pikes ever caught in the castle loch. This adventure is said to have cured the gander of his propensity for wandering."

Of course no modern trimmerer—I mean no "good" angler, who occasionally finds himself associated with a trimmering expedition—would use or sanction the goose or duck trimmer; and I quite admit that all "good" anglers should have some qualms of conscience about the use of *any* kind of trimmer. How can they help feeling such qualms when they read the terrible things which have been written by modern angler-authors of the trimmerers of jack? Hofland says that "trimmer fishing is unworthy of a sportsman," and that "the skilful artist will disdain to have a trimmer in his possession." Trimmer fishing, says another, is a "very childish affair." Mr. Pennell says it "ought to be the abomination of all

pike fishers;" while in his *Book of the Jack* he most sarcastically devotes a chapter to trimmering, the whole of which is comprised in about six lines, running as follows:—

"Procure a good supply of old bottles, rusty hooks, and clothes-line, and the assistance of the most notorious poacher and blockhead in the neighbourhood; and the chances are that the angler will find himself exactly fitted to his sport both in tackle and companionship, without 'violating the bond of like to like.'"

The word "trimmering" has an evil sound, suggestive of wrong-doing piscatorially; so I will say no more about it than ask this simple question, "What is the *real* difference between fishing with an ordinary trimmer and ordinary live-bait fishing for jack, where you let the fish go off with your bait and pouch it, and thence simply drag him ashore or to your net?"

As regards the gastronomic merits and demerits of jack there is much to be said. Generations ago they were high in favour in some countries, though unpopular in others. Dr. Badham tells us that in some parts of France to this day *brochets* are deemed but poor man's fare, while in other parts, Châlons-sur-Saône for instance, they are highly esteemed. Italians are shy of jack; Spaniards wont touch them. During the reign of Edward I., when *possibly* the fish was first introduced into this country, jack was so dear that few could afford to eat it, the price, as Yarrell informs us, being double that of salmon and ten times higher than either turbot or cod. Hence we may presume that this not very "cheap jack" was a favourite dish, mainly on account of its scarcity and dearness, elements which in all ages and countries seem to have given a flavour to articles of food and drink. In Edward III.'s

times they were carefully kept and fed in stews. In 1446 jack was one of the chief dishes in the High Church festival given by George Neville, Archbishop of York. In the reign of Henry VIII. "it fetched as much again as house lamb in February, and a very small pickerel was dearer than a fat capon;" and "pike" figured on all the *menus* of civic banquets in London and elsewhere for many generations—

> "Lo! the rich pike, to entertain your guest,
> Smokes on the board, and decks a royal feast."

In Germany they were once great favourites, but not so now. English taste, generally speaking, has certainly changed as regards the merit of jack, few persons nowadays caring much for them, and many strongly disliking them. But those who do like them swear by them, and rank them above almost all other fresh or salt water fish. I know a solicitor, for instance, who stoutly maintains that, according to his taste, a five or six pound jack is the very prince of fishes, and he never fails to secure one when he can, thus disproving, as an attorney-hater might suggest, the *dictum* of Juvenal, who says,—

> "Parcit cognatis similis fera."

Undoubtedly jack vary, perhaps more than any freshwater fish, according to the waters from which they are taken. Those from the Norfolk Broads are celebrated—"Horsea pike, none like" is an old saying—and the smelt-fatted pike of the Medway are considered among the best produced in this country. I swear—that is as far as I swear in this matter at all—by those from the Thames.

But of course the cooking has a great deal to do with the edibility of a jack, as also his previous treatment and preparation. I hold with the Thames fishermen that, when cleaned, it is well to rub the backbone inside with lemon or salt, and dry the fish in the sun and air for some hours before cooking. I also hold with Mr. Pennell, that jack, for table, should be cleaned as soon as caught, and *crimped*, like cod, while muscular action is still going on. I would strongly advise anglers who intend eating of their spoil to crimp their fish. I followed Mr. Pennell's advice years before he gave it, if this is not an Hibernicism. After being thus treated, I believe a jack eats best simply boiled with a little salt in the water, or baked with ordinary veal stuffing inside him. A modern angler of repute recommends "roasting with strips of bacon tied round the shoulders, and basting to a fine brown colour;" while a friend of mine insists that *the* way to cook a jack is to "simmer him gently in a saucepan with butter." Mr. Pennell gives a receipt for "filleted pike," which is to be served with gravy; but as the instructions involve the use of no less than ten different ingredients, I do not think he has contributed much to the art of cooking jack. All the old and almost all the modern receipts for cooking most fresh-water fish are so complicated that not one cook out of twenty could be depended on for carrying them out, even if they had the materials at hand, and time to use them. Walton's recipe for transforming a jack by cooking into "a dish of meat too good for any but anglers, or very honest men," takes up more than two pages in his first edition, and the old methods enjoined in the Royal kitchens in the 14th and

15th centuries, as seen in the Sloane MSS., are equally cumbrous. The existence of such instructions and recipes is certainly a testimony against most fresh-water fish, which must be very bad material to work upon if they require such laborious manipulation to make them edible.

I have recently discovered how the Jews deal with jack. They do not stew and serve them, as they do many other fresh-water fish, with port wine and treacle sauce. They boil them with oil and shredded onions in the water, and serve with a sauce composed of lemon and beaten eggs.

It may not particularly interest my readers to know that I have a special antipathy to jack gastronomically; but such is the case. It may be accounted for by the fact that many years ago I was asked to try and catch a jack of about four pounds, the sole denizen, at least of his family, of a small garden pond at a friend's house in Devonshire. He destroyed the goldfish and made himself generally unpleasant, but repeated attempts to capture him had failed. On this occasion, however, two or three trails of an Archimedian minnow with which I had taken some trout in the morning drew him from his hiding-place; he was soon hard and fast on the fatal triangle, and in a very unceremonious manner, without the compliment of a landing-net, hauled up on the grass-plot, where I received the congratulations of the assembled family. With one voice it was determined that he should be cooked for dinner; and of course every one was obliged to eat a bit and pretend he liked it. But oh! the taste of that jack! I have never forgotten it. "The touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still,"

are mere trifles in the way of memory to the reminiscence of the flavour of that jack, which clings to me now, though nearly twenty years have passed since the day he was served. He was supremely "fishy," and tasted of the quintessence of the dirty green stagnant water which had been his home, and, to use a grammatical form which may be questionable, he smelt as bad as he tasted. Ever since then the very name of a jack recalls my Devonshire experience, and the fearful struggle to swallow two or three mouthfuls and play the hypocrite at my friend's hospitable board. Every jack I see on a table seems to exale the same abominable odour: and if by chance I am led to touch a mouthful, I taste at once the same abominable flavour. In *The Haven of Health* we are told that "the pickerell or pyke is of firm and hard substance, yet giveth clean and pure nourishment." To my taste, anything but "clean and pure." There is something indescribably "fishy" in a jack beyond the fishiness of all other fish. He defies the art of cookery. To adapt slightly the well-known lines anent a rose, I say,—

> "You may cook him, may serve him with sauce as you will,
> But the same jacky flavour will cling to him still."

But perhaps this is all a matter of the fancy and imagination. Perhaps I am wrong, and my legal friend right. To him, therefore, and the Jews I commit *Esox lucius*, to do what they will with him. I will have none of him. I could eat, and I believe enjoy, a bit of old saddle-flap well stewed and served with rich gravy, a water souche of blotting-paper, or a thin deal board curried; but a jack I cannot away with. But *Chacun à son gout.*

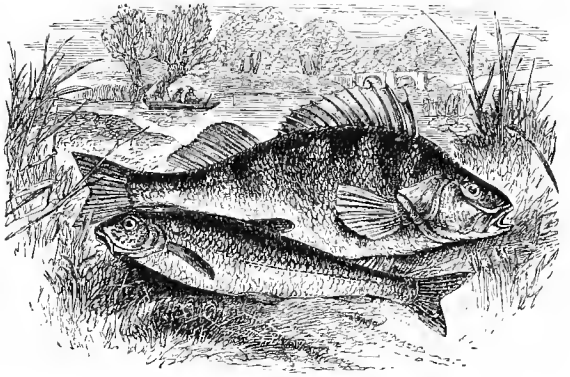
Old authors and modern say that the roe of jack is

suspicious if not dangerous eating; but Linnæus says he saw it made into bread at Lyksele, in Lapland.

All modern angling books, of course, deal with the jack; most of them very fully. But there is not one on this branch of fishing to be compared to Mr. Pennell's *Book of the Jack.* It is an exhaustive treatise on Jackiology, and as admirably written as it is exhaustive; and by every angler or would-be angler for jack,

"Nocturnâ versanda manu, versanda diurnâ."

I confess myself an old convert to Mr. Pennell's views generally, and am a thorough believer in his tackle, with the semi-exception I have above taken to his pendent triangle in our bait-fishing.



NOTE VIII.

THE PERCH.

(*Perca Fluviatilis.*)

"*Nor let the Muse, in her award of fame,*
Illustrious Perch, unnoticed pass thy claim;
Prince of the prickly cohort!"

AUSONIUS (*Trans.*).

"*The Perch with pricking fins, against the pike prepared.*"

M. DRAYTON.

"*The bright-eyed Perch, with fins of Tyrian dye.*"—POPE.

"*The greedy Perch, bold-biting fool.*"

Translation of "Complimentary Ode to Isaac Walton."

HERE we have a representative of the very few "spinous-finned" fish (*Acanthopterygii*) which inhabit our waters. He belongs, as his name implies, to the *Percidæ* family. And a very large and a very terrible family it is, distributed over almost all parts of the world, in salt water as

well as fresh. Its most dangerous members are the "stinging weever," or "sea dragon;" the "labrax," or "sea wolf" (after whose name, in a Latin or Greek gradus, is found such a string of epithets denoting his rapacity, voracity, and fierceness, that they make one's very blood run cold); and the "sky-gazer" of the Mediterranean, whose form is as hideous, as his ichthyological title, *Uranoscopos hemerocœtus*," is sesquipedalian. The general description of the *Percidæ* family runs thus:—"Oblong body, invested with hard, rough scales, serrated or spinous gill-flaps, and jaws, vomer, and palate well furnished with teeth;" to which should be added, "branchiostegous rays," which, being interpreted, means that the perch has bony, spinous fins, as some of us, perhaps, know—as some ack have heretofore known—by painful experiment. I hardly know which is the least easy to handle with any substantial comfort—a perch, a red-hot coal, or a lively hedgehog. A distinguishing feature of the perch is his *second* dorsal fin.

Dr. Badham gives us the origin of the word "Perch;" and on this point happily there are no labyrinthine entanglements or etymological and almost endless verbal wilderuesses into which we can be led, as is the case of the *unde derivatur* of the terms "Jack" and "Pike." Here all is plain sailing, and the whole course is traversed quickly and without a tack. "Perch" (also written "pearch"); French, *perche;* Latin, Spanish, and Italian, *perca,* from the Greek *perke,* the feminine of the adjective *perkos* (πέρκος), which signifies some *dark* colour, though it is as difficult to say of what exact shade as it is to define the ancient *purpureus,* usually translated "purple," or the "glaucomatic" hue of Minerva's eyes.

Perkos is used to signify the dark shade which olives and grapes assume when ripening, and a Homeric eagle is called *perknos*, from its dark plumage. Hence our "perch" is so called from the dark sable bands which bar his back and sides. There is, then, no question to be raised as to the origin and meaning of the word "perch." But I shall take the liberty of saying that I don't like this naming of the fish at all. Who were the etymological authorities, or godfathers and godmothers, answerable for it I neither know nor care, nor whether it was enacted by royal authority, or by some infallible Pope, *ex piscatoriâ cathedrâ;* but I protest against it as a bit of most feeble piscine nomenclature. Of one thing I am sure—namely, that when Adam had a grand parade of birds, beasts, and fish, "to see what he would call them," as he carefully took the beautiful river perch in his hand, he admiringly gave it some better name than merely "Dusky-fish." The old Anglican name by which it was known was a thousand times better than "perch." It was *Bears;* Dutch, *Baars;* German, *Barsch;* i.e. "Bars"—the *bar* or *barred*-fish.

I hope I shall not be thought trifling with what to me is always "a solemn subject," viz. etymology, when I ask why certain persons are called "perky"? This is a "slang" term now, but "to perk" was a good old English verb, signifying the same as the modern "to perch." Of course *thoughtless* etymologists will say that the term "perky" is applied to persons who are "perched" up, or "perch" themselves up above their fellows, and so assume a "perchitivity," and a certain unapproachability. And I know that Shakespeare speaks of being "*perk'd* up," and that Churchill, in *The Rosciad*, inveighs against persons

with "awkward briskness . . . . *perking* on a throne," and that Pope sings,—

> "If after all you think it a disgrace
> That Edward's miss thus *perks* it in your face."

All this may point to "perky" being connected with *perched* in its bad sense. But I shall suggest that "perky" as an adjective illustrative of character, or rather of manner, with a dash of *looks* in it, takes its origin from our *Perch* and his characteristics! "*Perky*," as I take it, is an epithet almost exclusively applicable to the female sex, when it has not transgressed a certain limit of years, and that it indicates a somewhat unapproachable and "spinous" little party, difficult and even disagreeable to handle, if handled unjudgmatically. Such a little party is generally associated with a certain compactness of beauty and form, and thus is, like our perch,—"Perky."

One more etymological memorandum. The author of *The Haven of Health* says that the "perch" is so called "by a figure of antiphrasis—*quia nulli piscium parcet*"—"because he does *not* spare any kind of fish." This is *lucus a non lucendo* with a vengeance. Our friend Pat does his best to back up this bit of etymology by calling the fish a parch."

Leaving etymology, let us proceed to admire our *Perca fluviatilis*. He is handsome, and beautiful too; though I admit his cast of facial expression is bad and vicious, reminding me somewhat of the wicked look which I always see in a barbel. The downward cut of his lips has perhaps something to do with his bad expression, the lower one seeming to "hang" like that of an idle rough who listlessly lets a heavy pipe depress one corner of his mouth. Still he (the perch I mean, not the rough) is both hand-

some and beautiful. His symmetry is perfection, and in this respect I hardly know a fish I admire more. He is resplendent with colour, both in harmony and contrast. The dark transverse bars zebra-wise striping his pale-shaded green body, his beautifully-arranged scales, the bright vermilion of his anal and caudal fins, the golden irides of his eyes, and his white belly make a picture which perfectly fills the ichthyologically admiring eye. When looked down upon in clear still water he looks transparent, the dark bars causing the illusion. And this reminds me of many happy summer days on Slapton Lea, when I have watched from over the boat's side the shoals of perch beneath me as countless as in Windermere, and admired their transparent beauty till I thought it almost a sin to attempt to ensnare them. It is a pity that the older a perch gets the more he loses both his beauty of shape and colour; but this is more or less the way of all flesh and fish.

Dr. Badham mentions several ichthyological peculiarities of the perch; there are one or two specially worthy of record. All perch, he notes, open the mouth wide when taken out of the water, and die with open gills; and hence one of the family, conspicuous for the first-named peculiarity, was called by the Greeks "*Channe*," or the "Gaper." And in connexion with this gaping propensity it is noticed that the perch gapes most when most hungry, and actually "brings his stomach up into his mouth, as an angry camel is said to do." Galen has ingeniously explained this strange stomachic *Orexis* (if I may thus describe it), saying that "as famished persons stretch forth their hands to snatch at victuals, so the stomach of this fish protrudes the gullet for the same

purpose;" and he adds, "generally it will be seen that whenever the conditions of hunger, a small swallow, and large lax fauces are combined, the craving stomach will be found making these instinctive, hand-like efforts after food." Anglers may have noticed how easily the stomach of a perch is drawn into his mouth when attempting to get the hook out. I had often noticed it, but did not know the reason why till I found it in Badham's *Fish Tattle*. It would seem, then, that this exhibition of the stomach is not in consequence of the fish having clean gorged the bait, but because the stomach has come at least "half-way" to meet the bait (?). The Channe, too, has the distinction of being a hermaphrodite, containing both sexes in its own person, the roe being half soft and half hard, and thus is self-concipient. Hence Ovid says,—

"Ex se
Concipiens Channe gemino fraudata parente."

I believe our own perch, if not every species of perch, is thus bisexual; but though these fish are thus denied the connubial bliss enjoyed by monogamous pikes and pikesses, they may be said to be fairly reproductive of their kind, a single half-pound fish having been found to contain as many as 280,000 eggs. They deposit their spawn in strings like festoons of pearls, several eggs being contained in one membrane, on weeds and stones, towards the end of April or beginning of May. The vagaries of the *Percidæ* are almost endless; but none beat that of the eccentric member of the family which in India and other Eastern countries comes out of his native element and climbs trees and *perches* among the branches. (No, my young and rash etymologist, this is not "the

reason why" the fish is called a *perch,* though Dryden sings of "hosts of birds . . . *perched* in the boughs;" so pray do not try to raise a fresh etymological question). The scientific name of this "queer" fish is *Anabas scandens* (see page 7), but I like to call him by a name of my own fabrication, *Perca silvestris.* Sir Emerson Tennent tells us all about him in his book on Ceylon. I confess I should like to make his acquaintance, as I should also like to meet an eel on one of his cross-country journeys by night, which "observant naturalists" say he makes, though I have never yet encountered the "observant naturalist" who has thus encountered a migrating eel. But of all "capers" I know none equal this of the perch which scales trees, and I should think *scales* himself sometimes in the operation. Sir Emerson Tennent tells us of "whistling oysters," and Badham of many musical fish. Perhaps our *Perca silvestris* will gradually develope further accomplishments, in accordance with the Darwinian programme of progressive creation, and take to "singing among the branches."

Of the wondrous tenacity of life in perch I have already made a jotting at page 20.

It is a remarkable fact—or what *seems* to be a fact—that nine out of every ten perch an angler takes are *females,* judging at least from the roe. Perhaps the bisexual nature of the perch above alluded to may account for this phenomenon; but I confess I speak with hesitation. I once saw a turbot in a fishmonger's shop in London Wall with both back and belly of the same colour —dark. The proprietor told me it was a "cock" fish, and that "cock" turbot (like "cock" perch) were *very* seldom taken.

Of all British fishes perhaps the perch is the most widely distributed, hardly a river or bit of still water being without his presence.

To refer again for a moment to the allegation that jack do not take perch. In my last Note, I bore personal testimony to the fact that a perch with his back fin cut off is almost the only bait used in Slapton Lea, and that the jack there take it greedily, and they must depend on perch more or less for their living. Moreover, I argued that if jack were as astute as they are said to be, they ought to know that the spines of the perch would not hurt them, as they would fold backwards when the fish was swallowed head foremost. Still I admit that a perch, generally speaking, either with or without his spinous back fin, is not a *taking* bait for a jack. Perhaps he does not like the thick skin and very closely set scales of *perca*. Even the crocodile of the Nile, as Dr. Badham informs us, is said to eschew the Nile perch; and certainly the prickly lophoderm of the perch is, to the eye at least, suggestive of caution. The old Saxons represented one of their gods standing with naked feet on the back of a perch, "as an emblem of patience in adversity and constancy in trial." The whole question of a difficult mouthful to swallow depends on how to accommodate it for deglutition. A donkey swallows a thistle (or at least he should do so) artistically, i. e. spikes upwards, the thistle folding up innocuously as he swallows it. A man can swallow a fork if he begins with the handle first. Why, then, should a jack make such a fuss about pouching a perch?

In answer to the question, to what size will an English perch attain, I answer four pounds. Occasionally they

will "top" this—but seldom. I once "assisted" in the capture of one which scaled 4¼ lbs. I landed it for a brother angler; and if an angler, who is generally the incarnation of all amiable graces and virtues, can feel envy, I felt it then, though, as I had enjoyed the best of the jack-fishing that day, I had the hypocrisy to say that I was glad *he* had caught it, and not myself. I felt, however, I should be pardoned the "pious fraud." The aforesaid 4¼-pounder, like many other good fish, fell into the hands of Cooper, of Radnor Street, St. Luke's, for perservation, not like Australian meat, but in a glass case where he still *lives;* but an ugly monster (here crops up my envy again), as all large perch are, being all belly; and, like all large perch, as I intimated before, bereft of a great deal of his chromatic beauty. This fish is, I believe, still at the offices of Mr. T. S. Haviside, 69, Cornhill. It was taken in the water at ——, where I enjoyed the very fair day's jack-fishing recorded in the last Note. At the hotel at Slapton Lea, a perch caught in the water there is figured (or at least was some years ago) on the wall of the bar-parlour in chalk, his weight, as far as I remember being indicated as 6 lbs.—a veritable percidal monster, and a notable capture from the Lea, where the fish, owing probably to their countless hosts, run small. Yarrell records a perch taken from the Serpentine which weighed 9 lbs., and Pennant another of 8 lbs. But these weights are far distanced by those of the perch of Scandinavia and other northern climes, as also by those of the Danube. Few English perch attain 2 lbs.—very few 3 lbs.—still fewer 4 lbs. I doubt whether half-a-dozen perch are taken in the United Kingdom in the year which scale the latter weight. In the Thames a 2 lb. fish is a good fish, a 3 lb. fish a better,

a 4 lb. fish of course a better still; and though I will not say there is not a 4 lb. perch in the Thames, I would give an angler a whole season's perch-fishing, and make a handsome wager he does not catch one of that weight. One of this weight, however, was taken at Chertsey bridge by a gentleman, spinning, in April, 1876; and of course returned to the river. To sum up I say," Youthful, middle-aged, or grey-haired angler, if you catch a 2 lb. perch, be contented; if a 3 lb., be happy; if a 4 lb., be superlatively rejoiceful, and invite all your piscatorial friends to an oyster supper (3*s.* 6*d.* per dozen), with still Moselle or best Chablis; if one over 4 lbs., you have accomplished the object of your life, and fulfilled your mission; you have nothing else worth living for; send me your stock-in-trade of tackle and all your orders to fish the best waters in the kingdom,—and die (as soon as possible) happy."

I have an idea that readers of books on angling like to hear something about the writer's personal experiences with the fish he is treating of, and to find in his pages a few records of his "takes." Here, then, is a brief one of "A day with the Thames Perch," two years ago, in the month of February.

Up by candle-light—a most disagreeable operation—and off breakfastless from Paddington by the seven a.m. train, which crawls down to Taplow at a slower pace than that in which relays of fair trotters could do the journey. In due, or rather undue time, I am at Maidenhead Bridge, and at Ned Andrews' cottage, where some rashers of an excellent gammon of bacon frizzling in the pan, and some hot tea, lead to the enjoyment of a most appetizing breakfast before we commence operations, Mrs. Andrews pro-

testing, in the language of the natives, against beginning work on a "leer," i. e. empty stomach. We are soon in the punt, and, as soon as the strong stream permits us, at Boulter's Lock, and about a quarter of a mile above it we make our first pitch. The sun is shining brightly, the air "keen and eager," the water fairly clear, but with a slight milky hue about it which fishermen do not quite like. Taking all things together, however, it was a likely day for jack and perch to feed; and so it turned out as regards the latter, though they had not been feeding much for some days before. I soon had a snap bait out for jack and a paternoster with minnows for perch, and these I tended, seated on a Windsor chair, after the Thames fashion, in the stern of the punt. Ned set to work with a Nottingham rod and tackle, the bait being the tail of a lob worm on a smallish hook, and kept close to the bottom. A few chopped lobs were thrown in, to suggest a morning meal to our spinous friends, and it was soon evident that a diet of worms, and not minnows, was to be the order of the day. Three or four were soon on board, but not one touched the minnows. After losing a jack which paid a visit to my lively roach, and the perch seeming to go off, we determined to change the venue, and so my fisherman punted up to Formosa, while I stamped my feet along the tow-path to restore the somewhat sluggish circulation of my extremities, and admired the Clieveden Woods, which, with their multitude of yew-trees and other evergreens, I thought looked as charming as they do in their summer and autumn foliage. We pitched again a little way up one of the backwaters near Formosa, in about six feet of water, and I was soon at work, using ordinary bottom fishing-tackle, a gentle back eddy

working the float round from time to time into a slight bay. Here the perch showed the same gastronomical taste as below, for they confined their attentions to the worm, and would not look at the minnow on the paternoster which I had thrown out at the side. The fish bit very "gingerly," and by no means every swim, belying the character given them in the angling-books of being "greedy biters." But the biting was fairly continuous for two hours, during which I took about a score perch and about ten roach.

And a handsome dish of perch they were, as ever need gladden an angler's eye. Among them were two which drew on the steelyards 2¼ lbs. each, several pounders and three-quarter pounders, and hardly a small fish at all. I took a few more fish on our return homewards at our morning swim, and when we came to ascertain the sum total of our fish it was found to stand thus:—Thirty-one perch, sixteen roach, and two jack; total weight, 35 lbs., of which the thirty-one perch weighed 20 lbs. I do not say that this was a supremely wonderful day, even for the Thames, where the perch are very capricious and shy, but it was a day such as a Thames angler seldom has among the perch. A 2 lbs. fish is a *rara avis* in the Thames, and to take two over this weight on the same day was enough to make me very happy. I often think that the older a man gets the more delighted he is at taking good fish. I have already intimated, in reference to the day's fishing, that the perch would not touch the minnows; and in the evening we met two gentlemen who had been toiling all day with this bait in Lord Boston's water, higher up the river, and had not taken a single fish! But my day's sport pales before one related to me shortly afterwards,

and said to have been had just above Teddington Lock. My informant said he knew the man who had it, and that his friend in a few hours took a total weight of 32 lbs. of perch, and further, that among the fish were "several of 2½ lbs. each, and *three of* 3½ *lbs. each.*" I was fairly astounded at the record, and though the particulars of this capture were again given by my informant, and after he had again verified them, I cannot help thinking there must be some mistake somewhere.

For large perch in good numbers, the Kennet, from Hungerford to Reading, is the best water in England. Several angling authors have put on record their sport in it. One day Mr. Pennell and a friend took near Kintbury "several dozen perch, averaging more than a full pound weight each, and the largest fish considerably exceeded 2 lbs." The best day's perch-fishing Mr. Francis ever had was in the Kennet. He says, "I fished with a friend, and we took home thirty-seven perch, which weighed 60 lbs.; many of them weighed 2 lbs., and some were over that weight." He also relates that his friend had three large perch on his paternoster at the same time, of which he bagged two, weighing 2 lbs. and 2¼ lbs respectively, while the third fish, which was the largest of the three, got away. There are many and large perch in Virginia Water, and among my memoranda I find that Mr. J. H. Keene, on November 8, 1876, caught fifteen there, which weighed 21 lbs., and a few days before that eight which averaged 1½ lb. each. In February last I caught several in that water over 2 lbs., using a light leger line, and baiting with lob worms and brandlings. I have an impression that the largest perch in this country would be found in the lake at Blenheim.

I must leave my readers to refer to standard books on angling for definite instructions as to how to fish for perch, &c., for, once more to repeat it, these Notes do not profess to give such instruction to anglers. As a rule, *small* perch in stagnant water can be taken by almost any tyro in the piscatorial art, and with the roughest of tackle. The old books on angling tell us that the perch is a "bold biter," and so *small* perch are in many waters. He is in one sense more voracious than the jack, and, as far as I know, he has almost as good a digestion. In fact, he is well-nigh omnivorous. He will take any kind of worm, from the tail of well-scoured lob, delicate as the best prepared tripe or cods' sounds, to a bunch of stinking brandlings, the effects of the handling of which the best antigropelous soap and scrubbing-brush can hardly efface in a week; but let me add that the most killing worm I know of for Thames perch is a small red one found in abundance in the wet soil by the river-side, for the knowledge of which fact I am indebted to my old college friend, the Rev. R. Howard Rice, Vicar of Sutton Courtney, near Abingdon. He will take a *salmi* of gentles, a nubble of paste, an artificial spinning bait of almost any pattern, yea, even a gaudy fly in some waters. As for ordinary spinning and live baits—gudgeon, roach, dace, chub—he has little choice generally speaking, though perhaps a gudgeon is his favourite. And what specimens of live baits will he seize! When you are fishing for large jack, a perch, of 3 lbs. say, will take a bait intended for a jack of 12 lbs. He is like the little boy of nursery tradition, whose eyes were bigger than his stomach; or, perhaps, I should say the perch seems to cater for his larder, calculating by the size of his mouth rather than by the size of his gullet or his

internal capacity for stowage. When "well on," he seldom joins a "Committee of Taste" such as that which Mr. Rolfe, fish artist and angler, has so pleasantly delineated in his well-known picture. Still, like other fish, he has his "times and seasons," and is by no means always "well on." He is affected, though perhaps not to the same degree as many other inhabitants of our waters, by wind and weather and by other circumstances. In some rivers, the Thames and Kennet, for instance, and in some still waters, as in Virginia Water, he has become a highly educated fish. He is discriminating, and must be fished for with fine tackle, and selected and well-adjusted baits. He is seldom in a very great hurry to appropriate what is offered him, and hence one rule for the angler for "educated" perch is to "give them time." The angler also will do well to recollect that the perch has a rather tender mouth, and therefore should not be struck at too sharply or played too roughly.

As to the tackle to be used, and the most approved methods in angling for perch, little need be said. The perch is taken with almost any bait, and when bottom fishing for almost all kinds of other fish. He is taken when roach fishing; on the leger when barbelling; on Nottingham tackle, with the tail end of a lob, in a long, deep swim; on spinning tackle and live-bait tackle when fishing for jack. The paternoster, however, is the "most approved" method for perching (paternoster, so called, I suppose, from the shot or other expedients on the line to which the hooks are fastened, and which faintly resemble the beads Romanists use to calculate their prayers by). Personally I think paternostering is a tame kind of fishing, though in one sense it suits me as a confessedly idle

angler. For real sport, however, and the exercise of an angler's art in perch fishing, I prefer "roving" with Nottingham tackle, or rather an adaptation of it—a kind of live baiting, in fact—with a single gudgeon or minnow, hooked through the lip or back, and, regulated as to depth by a float, allowed to work its way down stream by a bank or line of willows.

I have found January and February the best months for perch fishing. Strangely enough, Isaak Walton says the perch "is very abstemious in winter."

I hardly call the perch a good sporting fish; and, like jack, the larger they get the less sport in proportion do they show. Walton, however, says he is "valiant to defend himself."

Of the culinary merits of *Perca fluviatilis*. I have not many words of commendation for our fresh-water fish generally; but a perch, i. e. a good *river* perch, has decided claims on our palatal consideration. Ausonius thus introduces him:—

"Nec te, *delicias mensarum*, Perca silebo"—

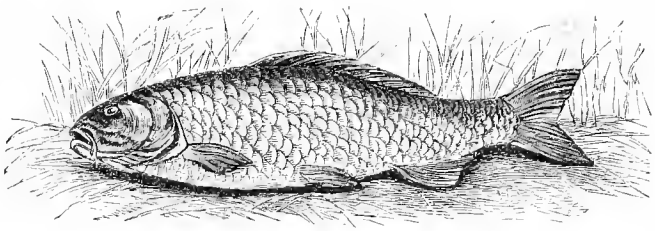
and the lines which follow have been thus translated,—

"Prince of the prickly cohort, bred in lakes
To feast our boards, what sapid, boneless flakes
Thy solid flesh supplies! Tho' river-fed,
No daintier dish in ocean's pastures bred
Swims thy compeer; scarce mullet may compete
With thee for fibre firm and flavour sweet."

The perch was held in high esteem among the ancients. One enthusiast speaks of its "flower-like" odour. Galen prescribes it for invalids generally; and one famous doctor, though he taboos all other fish, flesh, and fowl

to certain patients, permits them perch. In *The Haven of Health,* we are told that "the perch is likewise of hard and fast substance, and therefore is of more pure nourishment;" and Walton, commending him, cites the proverb, "More wholesome than a perch of Rhine." How perch were cooked in ancient days we have no record. The methods of cooking our own perch are many; and here it may be observed, as of all other of our fresh-water fish, that perch vary according to the water from which they are taken. The clearer and sharper the river the better the perch, as a rule. A Hampshire Avon perch is very good, and so is a Kennet perch; but a Thames perch is the best of all perch. A stagnant pond perch is generally of the pond, "pondy;" but there are exceptions, and I would strongly advise all fish-eaters never to refuse a Virginia Water perch, which is little, if at all, inferior to his brethren of the Thames. Dr. Badham tells us that the common perch on the Continent is generally stewed in vinegar, fresh grape, orange juice, or some other sour sauce; but on the Lago Maggiore they are spitted in their scales, and basted while roasting with some acid sauce, while in Holland butter is added. There is an "infinite variety" of dressing and serving them among ourselves. Some simply boil; some broil; some fillet and fry with egg and bread crumbs; some swear that the perch must be cooked in his skin and scales, whatever process he is subjected to, and deal with him as gipsies do with a hedgehog, though *minus* the clay crust. Manipulated in the form of a "spread-eagle" with the scales intact on a grid, with a suggestion of butter and cayenne, served piping hot, and eaten with lemon, he is "very good," as also baked whole in his jacket; but the

best perch I have ever had served to me were skinned and broiled very delicately in buttered paper. For this excellent cookery I was indebted to an old lady in whose cottage I was lodging near Maidenhead Bridge, when on a fishing "outing;" but it is not every hand that can thus deal with a perch. Medium-sized perch are the best eating; and at home I invariably have them broiled in the jackets—i. e. with the scales on—and the body not laid open. And here I will halt, merely adding that I consider a Thames perch a *most* edible fish, especially if cooked by a Thames fisherman's wife. I always leave it to her to decide on the special method of cooking it, as long as she has dried the fish before cooking it, and rubbed a little lemon or salt along the back-bone to eliminate the muddy flavour that will attach to most fresh-water fish unless overcome by some artificial means.



NOTE IX.

THE CARP.

(*Cyprinus Carpio.*)

"*The well-grown Carp, full laden with her spawn.*"
FRANCIS QUARLES.

"*The yellow Carp, in scales bedropp'd with gold.*"—POPE.

"*Or on the Carp, whose wary eye*
Admits no vulgar tackle nigh,
Essay your art's supreme address,
And beat the fox in sheer finesse."
Translation of "Latin Ode to Walton."

HERE we have a member of another family of the *Malacopterygii* Order ("soft-finned" fish),—the *Cyprinidæ*, or Carps, whose chief characteristic is their toothless jaws, though they have powerful teeth in their throats. To this family also belong many of our fresh-water fish, such as the barbel, the tench, the bream, &c., all of which have the family name *Cyprinus* prefixed ichthyologically to their second or more distinctive appellation.

But our common carp—*Cyprinus carpio*—seems to have been known to the ancients by the first title alone,

Cyprinus in Latin and Κυπρῖνος in Greek being, of course, one and the same word. There are three distinct reasons, I gather from Dr. Badham, for presuming the identity of the ancient *Cyprinus* with that of our common carp. The first is the statement of Aristotle, that the *Cyprinus* "has no tongue, but a soft fleshy palate strongly resembling one;" and certainly the "fleshy palate" of the common carp is a distinguishing feature of this fish, though shared in a degree by other of the *Cyprinidæ;* and it has given currency all over the world to the common though incorrect expression, a "carp's tongue." The second is that the *Cyprinus* is especially called "scaly" by ancient authors, that is, "scaly" *par excellence;* and it is a fact that our common carp is distinguished above all other fish of his size for the largeness of his scales. The third point of identity is, that the possessors of both names have obtained an equal celebrity for their fecundity; our own carp being a noted breeder, while the *Cyprinus,* according to Oppian, spawns five, and according to Aristotle, not less than six, times a year. There must be some exaggeration here; but I believe that naturalists agree in stating that our common carp spawns more than once in the twelve months. It is said that a three-year-old fish will produce as many as 700,000 eggs in the course of the year; and it is a fact that the roe, when extracted, will sometimes turn the scale against the rest of the fish.

And this matter of the fecundity of the carp naturally brings on the inevitable etymological discussion as to the origin and meaning of the word *Cyprinus*—or, as we had better take it in its Greek form, *Kuprinos,* for it has been suggested that this word is only the adjective form of

Kupris, Venus—the Goddess of Love—whose name was applied to the carp on account of its fecundity. I must confess I think the idea of the carp being "Venus's own fish" is pretty enough, and I am satisfied with the etymology, though I see that the learned Dr. Badham, who delights to dabble in fishy derivations, calls it "conjectural." He ventures to suggest one of his own, and derives *Kuprinos* from the Greek *kupeiron*, a "marshy weed," on the ground that the carp has his "latitat among the weeds," and that "his favourite food is in the mud." He urges that the common vernacular designations of *burbaro* and *bulbaro*, by which the carp is known in certain Italian districts at the present time, give countenance to this conjecture; but it is not, to my mind, at all a reasonable one. He then goes on to discuss the origin of the word "carp," which is found in some form or other in almost all European languages, such as *carpe* in French, *karpfe* in German, *carpa* in Spanish, &c.; and objects to the suggestion that the word is in reality the same as *cyprinus* and *kuprinos*, with a slight change and interchange of letters. Here, again, I venture to differ from the learned ichthyologist and etymologist; and I fully believe that in calling our fish a "carp" we are perpetuating the old tradition, that it is "Venus's Fish." Another conjecture, that "carp" is derived from the Latin *carpere*, to "seize" or "snatch," based on the ground "*quod semen maris ore carpens parit*"—*maris* being the genitive of *mas*, "the male"—I need hardly say will not hold water; nor will the notion that the fish "greedily seizes" the bait help us in the matter, for, as a matter of fact, he is a painfully shy biter, as most anglers know.

Where the common carp originally came from, and when introduced into England, it is difficult to say. Every one knows the old rhyme quoted by Izaak Walton,—

> "Hops and turkies, carps and beer,
> Came into England all in a year;"

and every one ought to know that the statements therein contained are *not true*. Carp were probably imported from Persia, and naturalized in this country in the fourteenth century. In her treatise on angling, published in 1486, Dame Berners says, "There be but few in Englonde;" but in the sixteenth century carp were to be found in abundance in all European countries, and among ourselves were cultivated in stews all over the country, for the purpose of increasing the supply of the orthodox diet of Lent and meagre-days. Carp were known of old to be gifted with powers of longevity beyond all other fresh-water fish. In congenial waters, like the ponds of Lusace, it is stated on respectable authority that they will attain the age of 200 years. Buffon speaks of carp in the fosse of Portchartrain which were 150 years old and still very lively fish. There is good evidence to show that some of the carp introduced into the ponds at Versailles at the close of the seventeenth century were living just before the revolution of 1830. At Fontainebleau there are cyprinidal patriarchs of perhaps as great antiquity, and a few years ago I noticed that some of them were nearly white, owing, doubtless, to age. Crafty fellows are these old French carp, for instead of trying in vain to bite the round, hard rolls which the old women by the wall of one of the lakes sell to visitors for the purpose of throwing to the fish, they push them along with their noses till they get them to the wall, against which they

are easily able to crush them, as they have by that time become softened by the water. I know, or rather did know, about ten years ago, a large white carp in the lake at Brocket Hall, in Hertfordshire. He was about 12 lbs. in weight, and could generally be seen swimming near the surface of the water by the bridge which crosses the lake. I dare say he could "score a century," or thereabouts; and probably in this country there are many centenarian carp, notwithstanding the irresistible temptation to drag all ponds and lakes which are supposed to hold big fish. The size which carp will attain varies with the water they inhabit, the food they get, and other circumstances. In some of the German lakes they reach from 40 lbs. to 50 lbs., and even more. In Holland 20-pounders are not uncommon, a specimen of one of which I have often noticed in a case, roughly stuffed, at a fishmonger's shop in Leadenhall Market. In France, perhaps, the extreme limit would be the weight just mentioned. In this country a fish of 12 lbs. would be considered a monster, but doubtless there are some of this weight, and even heavier, in Virginia Water, and in many private waters. But a fish of anything like 12 lbs. is seldom taken with rod and line. A 5 lb. carp is a veritable prize to an angler, and when he takes one over this weight he may consider himself one in a thousand. The engraving at the head of this Note was cut from the photograph of a picture of a famous carp taken by net out of Harting Great Pond, near Petersfield, in 1858. The photograph was kindly sent to me by Mr. Weaver, at the suggestion of a mutual friend, Mr. Crossley. The length of this grand fish was 34 in., not reckoning the tail fin. His weight was 24½ lbs. Some of his scales were the size of half-crowns. It will be

noticed that he is not as deep a fish as some carp are, and that he has not a very marked "Roman nose." Carp vary very much in configuration in different waters and according to their age. I believe Mr. Weaver's carp is the largest on record as taken in English waters, as it considerably "tops" the 19½ lbs. fish taken in the "White Sitch Lake," and whose picture is still to be seen at Weston Hall, the seat of the Earl of Bradford, in Staffordshire. I believe, too, that the Harting carp now figures for the first time in a book on Fish and Fishing.

There are very many topics connected with this interesting fish which I should like to enter into at length if space permitted. Their tenacity of life is surprising. How many hours they will live in an ordinary creel after being caught I should be almost afraid to say. Humane anglers—and all true anglers, I believe, are humane—give them a blow on the head after landing them, and do not care to try physiological experiments. But properly packed in moist moss, with a mouthful of bread steeped in brandy, occasionally renewed *en route*, they may be carried almost any distance in safety. In France they transport them from one place to another, wrapped in fresh grass, and they will keep alive for days if the porous basket in which they are enclosed is dipped as seldom as once in every twenty-four hours in fresh water. I have read and been told that in Holland they are suspended in nets in cool cellars and fed on bread and milk for months, by which process they are fattened for table. I have never been able to get this statement verified, and so I record it for what it is worth. Carp will live in water of 80°, and yet maintain life for some considerable time when frozen in blocks of ice. Of all fish they are the most sensitive of electricity and the

magnet. They fatten well when castrated. They seem to be more sensitive than any other fish of chemical refuse discharged into the water. All kinds of experiments have been made on unfortunate carp by vivisectionists, in the way of abstraction of the roe and replacing it with felt, and of evisceration more or less complete; and the records of these experiments tend to show that the carp bore the operations with considerable equanimity, and like those subjected to the Cardinal's curse in the *Jackdaw of Rheims*, not only were "nothing the worse," but "lived happily for ever afterwards." But enough on this topic. I am happy to say that I am a believer in the theory that fish, as cold-blooded animals, have little or no sensation of physical pain, though, barring the playing them on the "cold steel," I always behave to them as if they had.

Pathologically, there is much to say also about the carp; for, on the one hand, some eminent authorities, ancient and modern, claim that our *Cyprinus carpio* enjoys an immunity from all disease, while others maintain that he is subject to all the ills that fishy "flesh is heir to," and many more. However this may be, like some other fish, the carp, or parts of him, have been prescribed by the older physicians for a variety of ailments. His fat, says Dr. Badham, has been used as a mollifying unguent for "hot rheumatism;" his gall as a liniment for sore eyes, and a triangular stone, said to exist in his jaws, is said to act as a styptic, and to be efficacious for other diseases.

It is no exaggeration to say that carp can be domesticated like cats and dogs, for they can be taught to come to the sound of the human voice, or some artificial sound like that of a whistle; and will even suffer themselves to

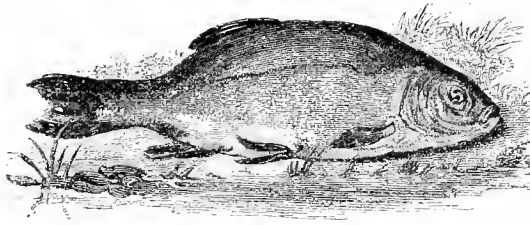
be handled. Some have even been taught to "answer" to their names. Colonel Goodlake, at Denham, near Uxbridge, has some large carp quite tame, which will feed from his hand.

Gastronomically, I have little or no reverence for the carp. In pre-Reformation days, when any kind of fish was made much of, and a variety of coarse food was eaten with a gusto by our ancestors and ancestresses, especially in the form of highly-seasoned stews, carp was all very well; but as soon as the eating of fish ceased to be a religious observance, each kind had to stand on its own merits, and educated Christians soon began to esteem carp of little value. Dame Berners, in her book on angling, to which I have occasion so often to refer, says the "carpe is a daynteous fysshe;" and in *The Haven of Health* the carp is included among the "ten sortes of fishe which are reckoned as principall in the preservation of health," and the author says that it is "greatly desired of great estates, and no marvaile, for it is in wholesomeness of great value, and the tongue of the carpe is very pleasant to carping ladies." But carp soon fell into disrepute, and rightly so, for without a rich sauce and all sorts of "herbes," the flesh is worse than insipid. Our revered master, Izaak Walton, gives a most elaborate recipe for stewing him, with ingredients and concomitants as many in number almost as the stars in the heavens, to collect and compound which life now-a-days is too short. Others have followed him, and even modern cookery-books persist in telling us how to dress carp, by stewing them or otherwise. But all to no purpose, at least in my opinion. The carp will be a carp, gastronomically, to the end of all time, unless we can improve the breed, as we have done that of our oxen,

sheep, and pigs. Carp cooked *au naturel* is, *me judice*, little better than steamed paper pulp, and, when stewed with an elaborate and complicated sauce, the latter is the only fairly edible, or, as perhaps I should say, drinkable portion of the dish. Carp taken from stagnant water are simply abominable, and but little better when taken from a river like the Thames. A carp, to be reasonably edible, or, as perhaps I should say, edible in a negative sense—i.e. not absolutely revolting—should be placed for some weeks in a narrow "stew" with a stream of clear cold water swiftly running through it. Carp were so treated in the days of good Queen Bess, when a stewed carp was thought "a dainty dish to set before a king" or queen. The same thing is done now in the Victorian era, and the carp taken in nets by the "royal" fishermen at Virginia Water are sent to Windsor and kept for weeks in a swiftly-running narrow "stew" under the walls of the castle before they are served, as a royal tradition, at the royal table.

Occasionally is found in English waters the Crucian or German carp (*Cyprinus carassius*) a fish more a bream than a carp in shape; and it is not to be confounded with the Prussian or Gibel carp (*Cyprinus gibelio*) which is a much more common fish. I need hardly say that the gold fish of our glass bowls (in which, by the way, I think it rather a cruelty to keep them) are carps (*Cyprinus auratus*).

I shall reserve, till towards the close of the next Note on Tench, a few miscellaneous memoranda in reference to carp piscatorially, as carp-fishing and tench-fishing naturally go together, the rules and observances of the one being in the main those of the other.



NOTE X.

THE TENCH.

(*Cyprinus Tinca, or Tinca Vulgaris.*)

"*The Tench, physician of the brook.*"

Ode to Walton.

The tench is another member of the *Cyprinidæ* family, and seems to "run in couples" with the carp, the two names being almost invariably linked together on the angler's lips. The fish are almost invariably found together in the same water. Mr. Pennell, whose general experiences as a fisherman and ichthyologist are second to none, says that, though he has known waters which contain carp to be destitute of tench, he cannot remember a single instance of the converse. There must, however, be many instances of waters containing tench only: I certainly know two such waters in Hertfordshire; and there must be many instances of ponds having been stocked with one fish without the other. Still, as a matter of fact, in nineteen cases out of twenty the two fish are found together, a phenomenon which *seems* to suggest that in the course of time the presence of one species causes the presence of the other; but I must leave it to Mr. Darwin and his school to point out by what law or process this comes to pass.

Ichthyologically, as I have said, the tench is of the same family as the carp. Like the rest of the *Cyprinidæ*, he has a fleshy mouth without teeth; but, unlike his first cousin, the carp, who, as I said, has the largest scales for his size of any fish, the tench has the smallest,—so minute, indeed, that owing partly to the objectionable slime with which he is covered, he seems both to the eye and touch to have no scales at all, feeling more like an eel than anything else, though, by the way, I do not wish to imply that eels have no scales. I take him, however, to be a very handsome fish. His colouring is very marked, though it is difficult to describe. Mr. Pennell calls it a "very dark olive green," while another authority terms it "a greenish yellow." I take the last description to be the best, though it must be remembered that tench vary in colouring according to the water from which they are taken. There is certainly a golden hue overspreading the best specimens of tench, but of a subdued character, and I consider him altogether a much handsomer fish than the carp for colour, and shape too, for he is not afflicted with the somewhat "Roman nose" of his congener. The "golden" tench now acclimatized among us are very handsome fish indeed.

Like the carp, the tench is very prolific and tenacious of life, and the habits of both are very similar. The tench is found distributed over nearly all parts of Europe, and, like the carp, he prefers stagnant waters to running.

He does not, however, attain the size of his relative, his extreme weight being seldom over 7 lbs. or 8 lbs. under the most favourable circumstances, at least in this country; and in small ponds he does not often exceed 2 lbs. or 3 lbs. I have a record that in October,

1874, one was taken in the Thames at Sonning scaling 5 lbs., and one at the Rye House on the Lea, last April, 4 lbs.; and a year or two ago, when the water was very low at Elstree Reservoir, a large number were taken of between 3 lbs. and 4 lbs. The best sample of tench I ever saw I "assisted" in catching in the Hampshire Avon, a few miles above Christchurch, in the year 1868, when Colonel Fane kindly put his salmon nets and fishermen at the disposal of a friend and myself for the day. We had but little luck with the chief object of our netting, but one of the "shoots" in deep still water under the boughs of a wide-spreading oak produced five grand tench—we were not aware there was such a fish in the river—which on being tested on the steelyard averaged just over 5 lbs. each. We returned them to the water after due admiration, but I have often regretted that I did not keep the largest for a glass case. I shall be a lucky man if I ever capture "his like again" with rod and line, for he weighed close upon 6 lbs. I have, however, seen it stated that in Italy the tench grows to 20 lbs.

Gastronomically, I have no opinion, or rather a very bad opinion of the tench, ranking him even below the carp. The ancients seemed to have differed in opinion as to his merits. Ausonius, I see from Dr. Badham, speaks disparagingly of him, as the poor man's *pis-aller*, and ranks him with other "vile fish;" and an old Silesian physician says, "The tench is a vile, neglected fish, very flabby and glutinous, bad for digestion—a food only fit for paupers and serfs;" while others seem rather inclined to commend him. He was kept in stews in this country like carp in days when fresh-water fish of all kinds appear to have been eaten, if not appreciated; and at the present

time he is highly esteemed at Florence, Naples, and in Italy generally; and in Holland it is said that he is considered a first-rate delicacy, and equal to turtle. I shall not quarrel with the Italians or Dutchmen as to their tastes; but I must say I am surprised at Dr. Badham seriously giving a recipe for cooking tench containing as many concomitant ingredients as there are patterns in a patchwork counterpane. Another modern writer says, "The flesh of this fish is rich, luscious, and delicate," but he adds a saving clause, "although somewhat muddy in flavour," which seems to me very seriously to detract from his encomium. And yet another commends tench first partly fried and then stewed with onions and dripping, supplemented with various condiments, the body of the fish being stuffed with a piece of bread "sufficiently large to fill up the whole cavity, and to remove any muddy or disagreeable flavour." It is the old story. Fishermen like to utilize their fish, and are glad of any excuse for so doing. A Parliamentary Blue-book would be a good dish enough with a good sauce of various ingredients, flavoured principally with port or sherry, providing you only consumed the sauce. I should like to see the man who could eat a bit of broiled or boiled tench as he would eat a bit of sole, salmon, or whiting, simply with pepper and salt, and really like it. He would be as veritable a gastronomic phenomenon as that peculiar people who eat dirt and enjoy it.

Connected with the subject of tench as food, I may here jot down a few memoranda as to the medicinal value credited to the fish, as given by Dr. Badham. A tench applied alive to the temple was said to cure nervous headaches, and laid over the liver in jaundice to draw all the saffron hue out of the patient, and expire of jaundice itself.

Cut in pieces and placed to the soles of the feet, it would overcome all fevers, and the dreaded plague itself, and so forth *ad infinitum;* while for invalids and convalescents tench broth was recommended as an intermediate diet between gruel and mutton broth. Wonderful fish! of whom the author of *The Haven of Health* (which I have quoted so often) says, "He is as medicinable to fishes, so is he wholesome to man's body." And this quotation necessarily involves a word or two in reference to the old tradition that the tench is the "physician of fishes," and especially of the pike, who, as Izaak Walton further says, "forbears to devour him, be he never so hungry." The idea was, and perhaps to a certain extent is, that the slime with which the tench is covered is a natural balsam of healing powers for the cure of himself and others. It has long been said that the tench, unlike other fish, is free from liability to all diseases; and certainly when carefully observing the fresh-water fish at the Westminster Aquarium soon after it was opened, I noticed that tench alone seemed perfectly free from that unnatural coating of slimy excrescence which more or less affected the other fish, and so sorely puzzled the ichthyologists of the Aquarium. But whether this freedom from disease, presuming the fact established, is to be attributed to the natural slime on the tench, and whether this really has the healing virtue so long credited to it, may be questioned. Camden, in his description of the stews in Southwark in his days, says, "Here have I seen pikes' paunches opened with a knife to show their fatness; and presently the wide gashes and wounds come together again by touch of tenches, and with their glutinous slime perfectly healed up;" but I have never seen any record of recent

experiments being made in order to settle the point. I am inclined to think the "touch of tenches" a myth. However, we may take it as a fact that the omnivorous pike refuses under all circumstances to take tench as food. To this bear witness almost all practical anglers and writers on angling, though one makes bold to say that the simple reason why pike do not eat tench is because they cannot catch them, owing to their always keeping at the bottom of the water. This, however, is not the case; for they often swim in mid-water, and in ponds, especially during hot weather, delight, like carp, to lie close on the top of the water, basking in the sunshine. Whether pike, out of gratitude to their physicians, or simply as a matter of taste, decline tench for their larder, must still, I fear, remain an open question, however interesting the solution of it might be.

By the way, I have not yet indulged my etymological propensities in reference to our tench; simply for the reason that I have never seen suggested, nor can I myself suggest, a derivation for the word "tench," which of course is only another form of the Latin *tinca*, and is found variously spelt in other European languages. In Holland the tench has the *sobriquet* of "shoemaker," in consequence of the thickness of his skin. So enough on this point.

Several Continental families bear the tench heraldically, and among ourselves the family of Tench.

And now a few words about angling for carp and tench. They are the commonest of our pond fish, hardly a piece of water of any size being without them, or at least without one or the other. In the neighbourhood of London, such reservoirs as the "Welsh Harp" and Elstree are

well stocked with them, though strangely enough there are none, I believe, in the prolific waters of Dagenham Gulf, beloved of London anglers. A few years ago there were many in the canals throughout the country, but the bargemen with their destructive drag-nets have thinned the stock down to a mere nothing. They are found in the Lea, where they seem to have been thriving of late years, heavy bags having been made by fishermen from time to time. There are a few in the Stort, the Colne, the Mole, the Brent, and some of the sluggish streams in Essex. The finest carp, in the south at least of England, I should say are in Virginia Water—some veritable monsters; but, as far as experience goes, it seems a perfectly hopeless business to fish for them there with rod and line. The royal fisherman occasionally takes a few with nets, and they are sent to the Castle for the royal table. I have understood that carp first got into the Thames at Weybridge, through an overflow of Virginia Water some forty or fifty years ago; but doubtless they have been introduced into the river from time to time, though in very small numbers, at other spots. Weybridge is still their favourite haunt, and some heavy fish are occasionally captured here, ranging from 6 lbs. to 8 lbs., and even larger. They are also taken lower down, in the Shepperton, Sunbury, and Hampton waters, and again higher up; but the stock does not appear to increase. Tench, on the contrary, seem to have been showing up more plentifully of late years. The Oxford waters, especially in the neighbourhood of Kennington Island, have been unusually prolific of tench during the last two seasons. There is a fair stock of them in the sluggish waters of Wallingford, and they seem on the increase at Weybridge. At this

latter place I took one of about 2 lbs. some twenty years ago, and so scarce was the fish then that my puntsman said that in his experience of a quarter of a century he had only known one taken in those waters before. The Sonning district also seems a favourite one for this fish, for I notice among my memoranda a record of 60 lbs. of tench being caught in October, 1874, by an angler in one day. This was a most unusual take; but perhaps there are more tench and carp in the Thames than the river is given credit for. As a rule, hot weather is the best for carp and tench fishing, but not when the sun is shining, as they are then inclined to bask at the top of the water; and it is said that tench are best on "when beans are in blossom." But there is not much in this adage. From the beginning of June till the end of August or September is the season for fishing for them in ponds and lakes, and the best time of the day, both for carp and tench, is the early morning and late evening—that is for large fish. In rivers they are caught much later in the year, and indeed throughout the winter, at least when the weather is open, as the yearly records of the Thames and Lea show; and therefore I cannot understand Mr. Pennell when he says that tench and carp probably retire during the winter months almost wholly into the mud, &c., and "at this time are hardly ever to be taken with a bait."

There is not much to be said in reference to tackle, but as large carp and tench are very shy fish, the finer the tackle the better, consistently with strength. Tench will sometimes, like bream, when biting, cause your float to lie flat on the surface of the water. I never quite understood this till I observed the movements of the tench at the Westminster Aquarium. A number of them were stand-

ing on their heads as they "nozzled" the gravel about, apparently in search of food. I have no doubt now that they often take the bait on a hook when in this position, and then rise straight upwards, tail first, as I observed them at the aquarium. The leads on the line, as I have already suggested at page 122, thus become suspended from the fish's mouth, and naturally the float ceases to "cock." As to baits, our fish do not seem particular. They take worms of all kinds, gentles, paste, and grubs, but perhaps a brandling is the most tempting. In the Thames, however, the tail of a lobworm takes more tench and carp than any other bait. Small boiled potatoes, beans, peas, cherries, and other vegetable dainties have also been recommended for carp, but I have not much faith in them.

In limited pieces of water which are well stocked with small or medium-sized fish, and not often fished, carp and tench may often be taken almost without intermission. I have already (page 115) mentioned a raid I made on carp in a pond at Stratford which had never been fished before. In weedy ponds, such as that was, it often pays better to fish a foot from the bottom in the open spaces, or even in mid-water, and sometimes it is well to use no float, but simply to let the line rest on a weed or leaf of some aquatic plant. And this leads me to refer again to the pond at Blackheath (mentioned on the same page) which was studded with patches of water-lilies. In bright hot weather the carp hung about these at or near the top of the water, frequently putting their noses clean out, and taking in a mouthful of oxygen. Sometimes they took in a triangular hook with paste on it, which I simply let down into their mouths (perhaps I ought to be ashamed

to acknowledge this un-angler-like proceeding), and then it was a case of "Pull ——, pull baker," between us, the result often being in favour of the carp, the tackle breaking in the lilies. I used to let my line rest, too, on the lily-leaves, with the bait only a few inches under water, and it was frequently taken by a fish as he was threading his way among the lily-stalks. Here, again, the water was scarcely ever fished, and so the carp were very unsuspicious.

But it is almost impossible to exaggerate the difficulty of taking *large* carp and tench, particularly the former, in *rivers* and in still waters, especially in those where they are often fished for. Indeed, I have come to the conclusion that it is hardly worth while to try exclusively for these fish in *rivers*—the Thames, for example. They are taken *occasionally* when the angler is fishing for other kinds of fish, either with the leger, or in the Nottingham style; and a good *Cyprio* or *Tinca* is a most welcome addition to the basket.

A big carp is undoubtedly the most shy and suspicious fish that swims in our waters. It has been well said,—

> "Of all the fish that swim the watery mead,
> Not one in cunning can the carp exceed."

Ichthyologically it might be expected that the carp would be a wily and crafty fish. Look at his brain. The *average* proportionate weight of the brains of fish to their bodies is as 1 in 3000. The stupid thunny only marks 1 for his brain in 3700; the fairly-astute pike, 1 in 1300; but the carp's brains weigh 1 in 500, which is exactly the proportion between brains and body shown by that clever beast, the elephant. Moreover, the organs of hearing, seeing, tasting, and smell-

ing (to speak generally and unscientifically) in a carp show a higher development than in almost all other fish. Thus, as I have said, we might expect the carp to be a particularly intellectual and subtle fish; and, of course, the older he gets, the more are his mental faculties expanded. Rightly does Walton say, "The carp is accounted the *water-fox* for his cunning."

Is it not, then, almost, if not quite, a hopeless task to set oneself—to catch big carp? Anglers and angler-authors admit it is a *most difficult* one by the various and almost numberless expedients they suggest. Here is one which would I think exhaust the patience of even the most patient fisherman :—

"A correspondent not long since wrote to me for advice. He had a pond in which were many large carp, and although he had angled for them in due season, from February to October, during seven years, he had not succeeded in taking them. I advised him to line with hurdles the bank of the pond at the spots where he meant to fish; to ground-bait those spots with red worms, gentles, and especially with sweet paste, for three or four days; to then take his rod, and, supporting it on a bifurcated prop (cut off the branch of a tree) inserted in the bank behind the hurdles, to place on his line a hook broken off at the bend—that is, without barb or sharp point; to bait the harmless hook with sweet paste, and to sink it nearly to the bottom of the already ground-baited water. The carp will soon take this bait; and, finding they can do so with impunity, they will become bolder hourly. Replacing the bait every time it is nibbled off, *and continuing to do so for three or four days* (*!!*), commence *then* angling *in earnest* with the same rod and line, but with a barbed hook, baited exactly as before, come behind the hurdle, and with very light float angle cautiously."

Is the "game" thus played "worth the candle"?

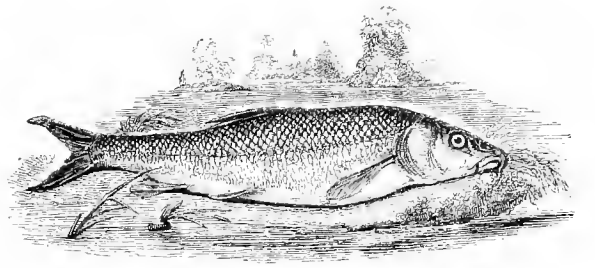
Mr. Francis and Mr. Pennell both seem to agree in recommending that the bait should lie *on* the ground some inches (say six) from the perpendicular gut bottom, which

is kept in its place by the lowest lead; and that the angler should not strike till he sees his *float well carried off*. Mr. Simeon goes further, and recommends that two or three *feet* of gut should lie on the gronnd above the bait. The idea is of course that the fish will not notice the gut when it lies horizontally at the bottom, as they would if the bait hung perpendicularly from it. I do not question the soundness of these views; but, in accordance with them, why not use a simple leger line? To show how authorities differ, I may mention that Professor Owen, an experienced carp-fisher, recommends fishing six inches *from* the ground.

As far as my own experience goes in *pond*-fishing for large carp, I prefer the bait *just touching* the ground; and whenever I can, I like my bait to travel a little. To effect this I fix a leaf or feather to the top of the float; but then I need hardly say you want wind, and that in the right direction, to suit your swim. It is certainly a good plan to throw a little ground-bait for three or four days in succession into the spot you have selected for your operations, but *not too much;* also while you are fishing to throw in *sparingly* chopped worms, pellets of paste, or small pieces of whatever bait you are using. There is no bait better, in my opinion, than the tail of a well-scoured lob-worm; but angling authorities generally advise a well-scoured brandling. You cannot well keep too far from your float. If possible, secrete yourself behind a natural or artificial "blind." If possible, too, have the sun in front of and not behind you; and above all be quiet, and do not impart the least vibration to the water either from the land or your boat. In the latter, wear list slippers, or goloshes. But with the best appliances, the weather in

your favour, with abundance of fish within your reach, and with abundance of fishing knowledge and skill in yourself, you will not catch many *big* carp without a huge stock of most consummate patience—and not often even then. *Carpe diem* has been translated, "Take a day's carp-fishing"—yes, by all means; but, remember, "carp-fishing" and "carp-catching" are two very different things.

Happy angler if you *ever* get a real good day with *big* carp! For a big carp is a grand sporting fish and of immense power, and being, as Walton says, "a leather-mouth fish which doth seldom break his hold," you have a good chance of landing him if your tackle be sound. He fights bravely to the death.



NOTE XI.

THE BARBEL.

(*Cyprinus Barbatus, or Barbus Vulgaris.*)

"*The Barbel, than which fish a braver doth not swim.*"
MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"*And the whisker'd Barbel pays*
His coarser bulk to swell your praise."
Translation of "Latin Ode to Walton."

"*Large yellow Barbel at the bottom lie.*"
Odelet to Walton.

"*And some with upper lip thrust out*
Like that fish for routing—a Barbel."—FLOOD.

THAMES Anglers, whose name is Legion, comprising all sorts and conditions of men, generally divide themselves into classes, each as a rule pursuing and mainly confining itself to some particular fish. There is your trout-spinner, who despises all who seek less nobler game than the *Salmo fario* of the metropolitan river, and who looks even on the angler who would capture one of these speckled

beauties with a live-bait, or in any other way except by scientific spinning, as little better than a poacher or pot-hunter. There is your roach-fisher with his ground-bait, his twelve-foot rod and single horsehair and other appurtenances of his craft *en règle*, a good stock of patience and a light hand, who considers that no line of angling except his own is worthy of the name of an art. There is your paternostering perch-fisher. There is your dace-fisher, who deftly casts his delicate fly over the sparkling shallows; and your chub-fisher, who throws his ponderous humble bee, cockchafer, or "Marlow crow," beneath the willow boughs, and looks on bottom-fishers with supreme contempt. There is your jack-fisher, who confines his attentions to *Esox lucius*, and thinks it hardly orthodox to be seen on the Thames till November, when the weeds have partially died down. Then there is Paterfamilias, the happiest of all fishermen, who throws his whole soul into gudgeon-fishing, and delights to fill his punt with "Missis and the kids," who all join in the sport, and frequently kill more fish than Paterfamilias himself, though he insists on instructing his party in the art of capturing this toothsome little morsel. And, lastly, there is your barbel-fisher, as enthusiastic as to his branch of angling as any of the preceding, and perhaps more so, looking on a good day with this fish as *par excellence* the sport of the Thames. I do not mean that there are no "general" fishermen who frequent the river, and who, when one kind of angling does not pay, try another, according to the season. There are many such; but, as a rule, Thames anglers seem to make one particular fish the special object of their capture, and swear by the particular kind of angling to which they mainly devote themselves.

I have a special sympathy with barbel fishermen.

Our *Cyprinus barbatus* is a most distinguished member of the carp family, and has a special historic interest for us, owing to the fact that it forms, on "Coat of Bar," one of the four quarterings of Margaret of Anjou, wife of our Henry VI.

Happily there is no etymological difficulty about his distinctive name, *barbus* or *barbatus;* for it is clear that he derives his appellation from the barbels or beards (*barbæ*) with which his nose and upper lip are furnished. *Barbus* was the name he was known by to the ancient Latins; and Greeks in Belon's day called their barbels *musticata,* and do so now for aught I know—a name obviously derived from the old Greek word μύσταξ (mustax), which in Theocritus means "beard on the upper lip," and indicating the barbel as the fish with the "moustache" (mustax). These barbs, the ichthyologists tell us, enable the fish to find its way about in deep and dark waters, and also give him a discrimination as to the substance with which he comes in contact as he "rootles" like a pig among the stones and mud.

Walton says the barbel "is of a fine cast and handsome shape," but it can hardly be held that his outline is graceful, his "Roman nose" seriously detracting from his symmetry; while his eyes have always struck me as having a very villanous and spiteful expression. He is, however, possessed of great beauty of colour—the bright olive-green of his scales, with a tinge of sheeny gold towards his white belly, being very attractive; and I must confess I always contemplate a barbel, say of 5 lbs. or 6 lbs., when in good condition, with a large amount of admiration.

Barbel are found in many parts of the world, but

chiefly in the warmer latitudes of Europe. They abound in the Danube and Rhine, and in most rivers which fall into the Black Sea. I fear not a few in Russian and Turkish waters will fall victims, before this year has passed, to the villanous torpedoes. They are by no means widely distributed in the waters of the United Kingdom, and in this respect differ from most British fishes. I believe they are not found at all in Scotland. The Thames and Trent are the chief English rivers which hold them: and Trent fishermen certainly carry off the palm for their skill in barbel-fishing.

Barbel are often taken when spinning for trout in the Thames during April and May, and not seldom hooked foul, when they exhibit amazing strength. I once hooked by the tail a 6 lb. fish in Weybridge Weir, and it took me a full half-hour before I got him into the landing-net. They spawn generally in May, but in late seasons not till June. Under any circumstances it would be well if barbel-fishing were illegal in the Thames till July. Barbel reach a weight of between 40 lbs. and 50 lbs. in some continental waters; but I take it that about 15 lbs. is an outside weight in either the Thames or Trent. A 10 lb. fish does not fall to the lot of the most inveterate barbel-fisher more than once in his lifetime. He may always be more than contented with one of 8 lbs.

Whether there are more or less barbel in the Thames now than there used to be may be a question. Yarrell in his time said that they were "so numerous about Shepperton and Walton that 150 lbs. weight has been taken in five hours, and on one occasion 280 lbs. weight of large-sized barbel was taken in one day." I suppose Yarrell is speaking of the exploits of single rods. It is not

often of late years that takes approximating the above have been recorded; but still there are many barbel-fishers now alive who have scored their cwt. Perhaps the truth is that barbel are as plentiful in the Thames as ever—and even more so—but, like other fish, they have become more educated of late years. It has been observed also that during the last decade they have become more capricious in their habits of feeding. Years ago they were almost always "on" in July, August, and September, but now-a-days they are more often "off" than "on," even when the weather and water would seem most favourable to their biting, and ground-bait has been judiciously administered; and in some swims, as, for instance, beneath the Victoria Bridge, near Datchet, they refuse to bite altogether. It may be remembered that a few seasons ago there was hardly an occasion during a whole summer and autumn when they were "on" at all, and barbel-fishing that year was almost an entire blank. It may be worth the consideration of anglers, whether it would not be advisable to try *new* "swims," and give the traditional ones, which all have their geographical names and are fished to death, a rest. Mr. Bailey, the celebrated Nottingham fisherman, has tried this plan on the Thames for several seasons with considerable success. The most "educated" and therefore the most wary fish, as well as the best fed, are in the *old* swims; whereas, with a little trouble, partly uneducated shoals unused to the sweets of ground-bait may be found in new ones, and often in localities where they are least expected. I once found a *new* barbel hole or swim not far from Old Windsor lock, and from time to time took some capital fish from it. But—"Oh, no, I never mentioned" it!—at

least its exact whereabouts! I have found September and the early part of October the best times for Thames barbel-fishing.

As to the gastronomic merits of the barbel, I have not a word to say in his favour. He is simply detestable in any cooked form, being the very worst of our fresh-water fish, and inferior even to a wretched white bream from muddy waters. Ausonius ventured to say that an old barbel was better than a young one; but this is doubtful praise. The taste of our ancestors does not count for much, considering how many nasty, insipid dishes they highly esteemed; and therefore the fact that in Queeu Elizabeth's day barbel were in sufficient repute to be protected by statute law does not modify my opinion of them; nor, again, am I influenced by the fact that our neighbours across the Channel, who are authorities on many gastronomic matters, hold them in esteem. The inhabitants of Tours and other inland places on rivers may rejoice in the well-known sign of "Les Trois Barbeaux," and store these fish in water-cages ready for use as we do eels; but we Britishers will have none of them; neither will we be cajoled by recondite recipes for cooking them, nor by the sauces with which they are recommended to be served. For once in a way I utterly disagree with that eminent ichthyologist and ichthyophagist, Dr. Badham, who "begs to assure citizen anglers and others who may be incredulous that these fish, simply boiled in salt and water, and eaten cold with a squeeze of lemon-juice, will be found by no means despicable fare;" nor will I be seduced by Bloch's recommendation to "boil them with a bit of bacon to heighten the flavour." The only way to make them eatable at all is to salt and dry them, and then they

are not much better than the bark of a tree would be subjected to a similar process. No; I would almost as soon eat his flesh simply boiled, broiled, or baked, as I would consume his roe, which is said "to produce symptoms akin to those of Asiatic cholera, racking pains and purging, cold extremities and deliquium." Even Walton, who panegyrizes almost every other fresh-water fish as food, says of the barbel, "He is not accounted the best fish to eat, neither for his wholesomeness nor his taste." I believe that ninety-nine out of every hundred anglers, and of the general public in this country who have ever made bold to experimentalize once on barbel-flesh, will join in an adverse verdict on it, fond though anglers be of eating of their own catches. Almost the only dissentients will be our Israelitish friends, who, on certain days called "White Fasts," so eagerly seek to obtain barbel at any cost, that it is said the Thames Angling Preservation Society put on extra watchers on such occasions to prevent poachers seeking to meet the demand; and Jews at all other times also eat them with apparent relish. But this may be a matter of ancient law or custom among them rather than of taste; though it must be remembered that Jewish cooks possess an art of manipulating fish of all kinds, and especially of frying them in oil, which few Christian *chefs* seem to attain. Jews also boil barbel in vinegar and oil, and certainly this method of dealing with them improves them. Still, if, as is the case, the wives of Thames professional fishermen, many of whom are the best fish cooks in the kingdom, and can make almost any fish eatable and enjoyable which comes out of their river, fail in serving up a barbel in a way agreeable to ordinary good taste, I doubt whether a Jewish or any other

cook in the world could make it acceptable to an English palate.

But, however much to be despised gastronomically, the barbel halieutically, or in an angling point of view, amply makes up for his carnal insipidity and positive nastiness. He is essentially a game fish when hooked, and fights bravely to the last. Walton says righty, "He is so strong that he will often break both rod and line, if he proves to be a big one;" and right was Juliana Berners on this wise: "The barbel is an evil fysshe to take, for he is so strongly enarmyd in the mouth that there may no weake harnesse holde him." His impetuous rushes and dogged downward "boring" are a most pleasurable pain to the angler, the great caudal fin, as ichthyologists call his tail, acting like a screw propeller, and giving him immense powers; while his pluck and tenacity of life prolong the contest far beyond the measure of any other fish of equal weight, the lordly Thames trout himself not excepted. When hooked near some projecting shelf of the bank, or the proximity of some old "snag," &c., the pertinacity with which he will bore for his "hover" is astonishing; and it was probably this tendency and pertinacity which led Walton to observe that he "endangers" the line "by running her head forcibly toward any covert or hole or bank." Walton also observes that "then he strikes the line, to break it off with his tail." Mr. Frank Buckland, in his *Familiar History of British Fishes*, repeats this remark, saying, "When a barbel is hooked, he always endeavours to strike at the line with his tail to break it." I hope I may be pardoned when I say, "I doubt this." How can Mr. Buckland tell what a barbel does "when he is hooked," unless he has encased himself

in a diver's dress, and lain in barbel swim, or observed this phenomenon through a glass window on a river's bank, as I have suggested at page 123 ?

My young friend and angler, who may perchance have these Notes in your hand, let me ask you whether you have even hooked a three or four pound barbel when fishing for roach on light roach tackle ? If you have, you probably have lost him very soon through want of presence of mind. But if you were self-possessed and played him artistically, you know what a job you had, what patience and lightness of hand you exercised, and that it took you a good quarter of an hour or more before you could get on intimate terms with him. I have noticed for years that there is no fish which seems to have a more instinctive dread of the landing-net; for when, after a long and desperate tussle, he appears about to " throw up the sponge," and allow himself to be brought towards the punt's side, no sooner does he catch a sight of the " Gangam of Fate " than a new lease of life seems to be given him, which he frequently takes advantage of, much to his own satisfaction and the angler's dismay, by snapping the tackle and getting clear off. When foul-hooked in the ordinary course of fishing with the leger or Nottingham tackle, or by a trout-spinner in one of the Thames weirs, the resistance he can offer is something wonderful; and many a trout-fisherman has felt his heart in his mouth, when, after days' or perhaps weeks' patient spinning, a sudden strike and strong rush lead him to believe he has hooked a veritable " spotted monster "—he finds, after all, to his intense disappointment, he has only got hold of a lank barbel, vigorous enough, but out of season.

Such being the strength and pluck of *barbatus*, I have

no hesitation in saying that on a warm summer or autumn day, when the barbel are well "on," the angler, moored in his punt in a pretty reach of the river, and well supplied with all necessary creature comforts, has all the elements of one of the most enjoyable forms of Thames fishing. I must plead guilty to preferring the old style of barbel-fishing with the leger. I say the "old style;" for though it has by no means gone out, very many modern barbel anglers affect the comparatively new fashion, called "Nottingham fishing," or "travelling." I have nothing to say against this style, which is certainly more artistic than legering, and at present more killing, especially when the still more recent device of allowing the bait to drag some inches on the bottom is practised. Perhaps the fish have got too accustomed to the sight of the leger, just as a few years ago they got tired of greaves, and have since preferred lob-worms. It may be, after a few more seasons, they will get shy of the Nottingham tackle, and tired of worms, and recur again to their greaves and leger. They are so very capricious that it is difficult to please them for very long together. I will acknowledge my weakness for that kind of fishing which gives least trouble; and Nottingham fishing involves much trouble compared with legering, just as spinning for jack or trout is more trouble than live-baiting. I like being at peace in my punt (as far as is compatible with balancing oneself on a hard Windsor chair). To work a "traveller," either standing or sitting, on a hot day, is very trying; but with the leger there is perfect rest and quietude. Your bait once thrown, you sit on your chair or on the well of the punt, with your arms resting on your thighs (at least this is

my "form"); in your right hand you clasp your rod, the top of which may, for further comfort, rest lightly on the edge of the punt, or, as I prefer, on my fishing-tackle case; in your left, between thumb and forefinger, your line, which you keep taut on your leger-bullet at the bottom of the water. And then you placidly wait, with half-closed eyes, in a delicious semi-dreamy state, or using them to take in the beauties of nature round you (for you have no wretched float to watch), till a single, double, or triple tug given by *barbatus* makes you concentrate all your attention on your rod and line, and strike when the due moment has arrived. So sensitive are the fingers to the slightest touch of the line, that a barbel or any other fish merely turning over the bait with his nose in a spirit of anxious inquiry, unfavourable criticism, or simple playfulness, is immediately felt, and the attempt of an old-stager to suck or bite off the head or tail of the worm is at once communicated. The exquisite sensation of something akin to a very slight galvanic shock is transmitted to the piscatorial brain and heart, which forthwith beats perceptibly quicker in the thrilling expectation that the premonitory twitching, or tremulousness, or gentle "tap," will presently assume the unmistakable form of a definite seizure of, and attempt wholly to appropriate, the bait. The nervous excitement of the most pleasurable kind which the barbel angler experiences during these uncertain but hopeful moments is "better felt than described." It far transcends that elicited by the bobbing of a float at the nibbling of a fish, and may even be compared to that produced by the splashing rise of a salmon or lusty trout at your fly, if it does not actually exceed it. Indeed, it is a piscatorial sensation, partly mental and partly

bodily, which penetrates *ad ima medulla*, and, as the Devonshire folks say, makes one "cream" from top to toe.

The great difficulty with the barbel-fisher is to determine *when* to strike—a matter on which no definite rules can be laid down, as this depends partly on the theory of the angler and partly on the humour the fish are in on any particular day. This, however, is certain, that when two sharp definite tugs have been given, or when the line, lightly held between the finger and thumb, is subjected to a sudden and prolonged "draw," you may safely strike, and strike with determination. Beyond this I shall say no more on the disputed question of "How to strike," whether by a sharp jerk or by a "sudden and prolonged *draw*" corresponding with the occasional action of the fish just mentioned; but the barbel-fisher must remember that he has a "lead" to move before the biting fish gets the full benefit of his strike.

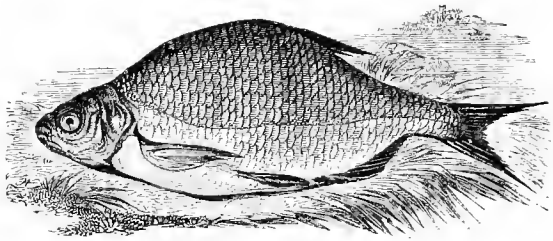
Nor shall I enter into the vexed question of ground-baiting for barbel, whether it should be done at some considerable interval before fishing a swim, or proceed simultaneously *with* the fishing. For learned discussions on this point I would refer my readers to the pages of Mr. Francis and Mr. Pennell, both of whom have discussed the subject, and, if called upon, are capable of writing as long disquisitions on it as Bishop Middleton has done on the Greek particle, and as Mr. Gladstone can do on anything or nothing. To record my own experience, I would say that I have had *fair* days' barbel-fishing, without previous baiting, only throwing in ground-bait in the shape of worms, and that *sparingly*, as I fished. As to "previous" ground-baiting, I prefer expending my

dearly-purchased or with-difficulty-collected quarts of worms in the morning, twenty-four hours before I fish, rather than in the evening, twelve hours previously. If you throw your worms in just before night, the "vagrom" eel gets more than his fair share, and does not yield you a fair percentage on your outlay by getting caught in the morning.

I am "free to confess" that I enjoy a good day's *leger*-fishing for barbel to any other day's fishing within reach of ordinary, or even extraordinary, mortals. It may be bad taste piscatorially—so "pity me, pity me, O my friends" and brother-anglers! but I cannot help it. The barbel has a special fascination for me, and perhaps no inconsiderable element in this fascination is the fact that I have had but poor success hitherto at barbel-fishing. I have pursued it for thirty years on the Thames—"on and off"—but the grand days have been "few and far between;" and even the grand days have not been *very* grand in comparison of some my friends, and enemies too, have had. True, I took thirty-seven fish one day, on the Thames, at Penton Hook, and there were several over 4lbs., and one nearly scaled 10lbs.; and twenty a little below Monkey Island, in about an hour and a half, on another; and a dozen in about the same time one afternoon in the *Old* river, between Datchet and Old Windsor Lock, the largest scaling 8lbs.—and so forth; but what of all this compared with the scores of days I have devoted myself to barbel-fishing on the Thames, and the tons (I had almost said) of worms I have expended in the pursuit?

To speak plainly, barbel-fishing is *almost* as uncertain as *big* carp-fishing; and a Thames or Trent barbel-fisher may as well make up his mind that, if he gets a good or

even *fair* day once out of a dozen expeditions, he must be satisfied. I still live in hope that some day or other (for I shall still persevere in barbel-fishing on my beloved Thames) I shall have *the* take of barbel which will be recorded in all future books on angling, and make my name much more famous than I can ever expect it will be as the author of these Notes.



NOTE XII.

THE BREAM.

(*Cyprinus Brama, Abramis Brama, or Abramis Vulgaris.*)

"*The broad-side Bream.*"—FRANCIS QUARLES.

"*The treacherous quill in this slow stream*
Betrays the hunger of a Bream."—Ode to Walton.

THE Bream, or, as the Thames puntsmen call him, "the brim," is another distinguished member of the *Cyprinidæ* family.

I find the word in several languages, *br* being the distinguishing letters. Thus, the Old High German *brahsema*, the Dutch *braasem*, and the French *brème*; but where the *br* originally came from, or why the genus was called *brama*, I cannot make out.

There are three kinds of bream found in Europe—the first, the Pomeranian Bream, or *Abramis buggenhagii*—a very scarce fish in our waters, as it deserves to be with such a horrid name attached to it; the second the common, or Carp-Bream (sometimes called the Golden Bream), *Abramis brama;* and the third the White Bream, or Bream-flat, *Abramis blicca.* The two latter are scattered

more or less over the waters of Great Britain, but it is with the carp-bream I shall have here to do. The white bream is a fish hardly worth pens, ink, and paper. It seldom exceeds a pound in weight, and though its colouring is pretty enough, being very silvery, it is covered with an indescribably nasty slime, something like starch, and almost as difficult to get off the fingers as bird-lime. When I used to fish in Dagenham Gulf, which swarmed—as indeed it does now—with these fish, and as a boy had no natural horror of anything nasty, I well remember my dislike to these fish, and was always disappointed when one turned up instead of a roach or perch. I therefore dismiss *Abramis blicca*, and those who take the trouble to read this Note will kindly remember that when I use the word bream I mean the carp-bream.

There is not much ichthyological interest attaching to the bream. He is not a handsome fish by any means, and though he is called "golden," his gold is of a very dull character, and he is not free from that objectionable slime that distinguishes his cousin the white bream. By the way, was the carp-bream originally a cross between the common carp and the white bream? I should think so, as he seems to get his "golden" colour from the former and his slimy coating from the latter. He grows quickly in suitable water, and when he attains the weight of 3 lbs. or 4 lbs. he is by no means unlike a pair of bellows in shape, being almost as deep as he is long, and hence he is called in some districts the "bellows" fish. In some parts of Europe bream have been known to attain the weight of 20 lbs., and it is recorded that, in 1749, 5000 were taken out of a lake in Sweden at one haul, the aggregate weight of which was 18,000 lbs. In

our best waters I question whether a bream of 10 lbs. has ever been taken, but certainly some have approximated to this weight. I have heard that 12 lb. fish have been taken in Loch Erne, and there is a legend that one of 17 lbs. was once taken in the Trent. I have seen a 7 lb. fish from the Thames at Datchet; but this is not by any means an extraordinary weight in some of the Bedfordshire waters. In the private water at Blackheath, which I mentioned in my Note on carp, I have caught many scaling between 4 lbs. and 6 lbs.; but, on the whole, an angler may be satisfied if he catches fish over 3 lbs., even in good water. An angler will always remember the day he has the good fortune to take a brace of four-pounders. Bream, like carp, are wonderfully tenacious of life, and I have read that they will bear transporting to a great distance, providing they are carefully packed in straw, with a morsel of bread steeped in alcohol placed in their mouths.

Bream are well distributed over Central Europe, but they are by no means so common in the British Isles as carp and tench. They frequent deep, still waters, where weeds and mud abound, but I think they prefer a slight stream to absolutely stagnant water. Bedfordshire is famous for them, the deep, sluggish streams of that county being exactly to their taste. The Ouse is decidedly the best bream river in England. The Norfolk Broads have of old been one of their most favourite localities. The Pulborough and Amberley waters, so largely resorted to by London anglers, contain many and good fish of this genus. The reservoirs, such as that at the "Welsh Harp," are fairly supplied with them. The Lea produces fine specimens, but not in large quantities; while the

prolific Thames, which holds almost every fresh-water fish in this country, also has its bream. But in the last-named river they are distributed sporadically, some districts being entirely without them. They are taken in the tideway as low down as Richmond; but upwards I cannot remember having ever heard of them above Marlow. The best district for them is between Hampton and Chertsey, the Walton and Shepperton waters being the most productive of all. They are a comparatively recent introduction into the river; and my idea is that they originally got into it from some overflowing of the Way, as the carp did, not so many years ago, owing to an overflowing of Virginia Water. Not long ago two consignments of fine bream were brought from the Bedfordshire Ouse and safely deposited in the Thames in the deep water above Boulter's Lock at Maidenhead, through the kindness of the Bedford Angling Club, which in return was presented with some barbel by the Maidenhead fishermen for transportation to the Ouse. This is a movement in the right direction, and might most advantageously be extended. There must, too, be scores of private ponds within easy distance of the Thames overstocked with bream, the owners of which, I am sure, would readily give permission to the Thames Angling and other Associations to take some of the fish and turn them into the river. There are many Thames districts now untenanted by bream, having deep and comparatively slow waters admirably suited for this fish. It might also be advisable to net a few bream in the districts where they already most abound, and transfer them to others not yet so colonized.

Here let me add a curious fact in the natural history of the bream which I had almost forgotten. In the spawn-

ing time, which extends through June and July, according to the season and nature of the water, each female is attended by three or four males; and thus the order of things which obtains in the Mormon "Church" (save the mark!) is reversed among the bream community.

And what shall I say of the bream gastronomically? I shall say, or rather beg it to be understood that I say, all I have said or implied of barbel, carp, and tench, as an opsophagist. According to my taste, the bream is equally bad as, or *more Hibernico*, "equally worse," than the coarse fish just named. I am aware, however, that the bream has his apologists, and even partisans. The oft-quoted Juliana Berners says that "the breme is a noble fysshe and a deynteous." We read in Chaucer, commendatory, as it would seem, of the fowl and fish in store for eating—

> "Full many a fair partrich had hee on mewe,
> And many a *brome*, and many a luce in stewe."

There is a French proverb, too, which says, "*Qui a brème peut bramer ses amis*," which I suppose is the same as that mentioned by old Izaak Walton in these words (as far as I recollect): "He that hath bream in his pond hath always a welcome for his guest." The great Cuvier goes as far as to say that the bream is a "moderately good" fish, and I believe the French even at the present day hold it in some degree of estimation, while some connoisseurs have ventured to declare for "a carp's head, a bream's middle, and a pike's tail," though, after all, this dictum may be taken rather as a relative comparison of the different sections of poor fish than as an absolute commendation of any. I will have no part of him, head, tail,

or middle. The whole fish is insipid in the extreme, and, as Bloch says, "when taken out of muddy waters, has a most *detestable* flavour." One writer has ventured to name what this exact flavour really is, for, after saying that the bream is in shape much like a pair of bellows, he adds, "and much the same in flavour." How he arrived at this conclusion I cannot say, unless he experimented on bellows gastronomically, as enterprising toxicologists take doses of poison; but still I would engage myself to serve up the well-stewed leather and even grated wood of a pair of bellows (leaving out the brass nails) with onions or curry, and present a more palatable dish than a bream could ever be converted into. The truth is, I have remarked heretofore, our tastes are much more educated than those of our forefathers, and the time has gone by, never to return, for a stewed carp to be regarded as a dainty dish, as it was in the Tudor period, or for bream to be kept in ponds or sluices as "welcomes" for our friends. Fancy any sane man in this latter half of the nineteenth century "welcoming" his friend and "guest" with a dish of bream! He would as surely convert him into an enemy as would the wives of our bosoms make the domestic mahogany to be abhorred of us if they persisted in presenting us with "cold mutton again" on Sundays. But as many an angler insists on eating somewhat of the fish he takes, let him kill his bream as soon as taken; let him behead it and "betail" it, and lay it open from gills to vent, even unto the dorsal fin; let him clean it well with water, rub it with salt or lemon, again clean it with water, wipe it with a dry cloth, and then let it lie in the sun and air for the flesh to harden somewhat and haply some of the evil humours to escape.

At least let him do all this directly he gets his fish home. After exposure to the sun and air, let him not wet it with water again, but broil it as it is, or fry with bread-crumbs (the former for choice), and eat with the best appetite he may. But with all this previous manipulation, or after carrying out one of the many recondite recipes for cooking a bream to be found in cookery books, and which we are assured make it a most toothsome fish, our *Abramis brama* is a very poor comestible—

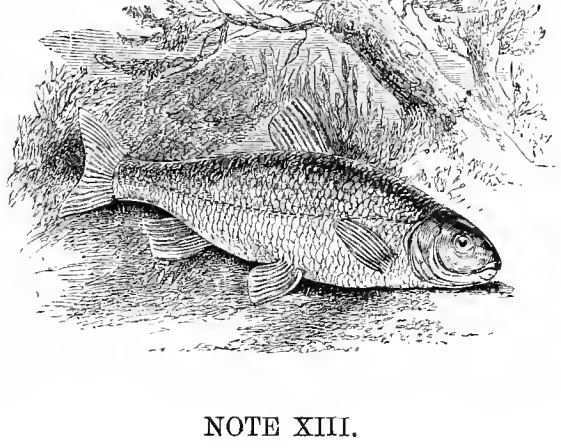
"The flabby solids fill'd with treacherous bones"

being, at least in my opinion, hardly fit food for Christian man, woman, or child, whatever English Israelites may think of it.

Viewed as a fish conducing to the sport of anglers, the bream may be well spoken of. Though not a particularly plucky and long-fighting fish, like the barbel, he is a very strong fish, his deep sides enabling him to offer great resistance, as the large fins of a barbel do for that fish. He makes bold, strong, determined rushes when *first* hooked, and a young angler with anything like fine tackle will have his nerve and skill well tested in landing a four-pounder. He is a shy and timid fish, and almost as crafty as an old carp, and very capricious as to his feeding, while of all fish he is perhaps the most light and delicate in his biting, and the larger he is the more tenderly does he seem to take the bait. Ordinary float-tackle, such as that used for roach, serves for bream, and in rivers where it can be used the "Nottingham" tackle may be employed with advantage, while big bream are often taken on the "leger." In float-fishing the hook should not be very large, as the bream has a much smaller mouth than many

other fish. The bait should be as near the ground as possible, and it is often found that bream will take it when dragging some inches on the bottom itself. Almost all the baits used for roach, perch, and barbel will kill bream, but certainly in the Thames none are better than the tail of a lobworm, the favourite bait of so many Thames fish. When the angler is trying almost exclusively for bream, he should strike on the slightest indication of a bite, for, as I have just said, the bream is a most delicate biter: but I must notice that a great authority says that you must give the bream plenty of time, because he loves to *suck* a bait in his lips before he really takes it, and because also he has a small mouth and prefers big baits. Groundbait of broken worms, carrion gentles, and bran should be used in bream-fishing, and thrown into the hole or swim overnight. If possible the poles to which the boat or punt is to be moored the next day should be fixed at the same time, so that the spot can be approached quietly. The bream is most sensitive to the vibration of sound, and, like other fish, to no vibration more so than to that produced by the feet on the floor of a boat or punt. I would therefore advise bream anglers to wear goloshes or list slippers, as I have advised in *big* carp fishing. Loud talking has not half the bad result as the vibration of sound conducted by the boat or punt into the water, the effect of the former partly passing away into the air. Let the bream fisherman, therefore, lay it down as a golden rule that quietness is a *sine quâ non* for successful "breaming." Large takes of bream are often had in the Bedfordshire waters and the Norfolk Broads; but bream are almost as uncertain as barbel as to their being "on," though carefully groundbaited for;

and they have a strange tendency to shift their quarters, and it has often been found that a hole or swim which has for weeks perhaps been frequented by shoals of bream, becomes suddenly tenantless. From July to October is the bream season, though they may be often taken during the winter months, and, indeed, to the end of February. September is the best month of all, but the warmer the day the better, only remember that in the morning and evening hours of such days the fish feed best.



NOTE XIII.

THE CHUB.

(*Cyprinus Cephalus, or Leuciscus Cephalus.*)

"*The Chub, whose neater name which some a Chevin call.*"
MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"*Oh, it is a great logger-headed Chub!*"
"Piscator" in WALTON.

THE Chub is yet another "Carp;" and as he seems "set upon" by more than one angler and ichthyologist, he has my sympathies. Naturalists have made the *Leucisci* (λευκός "white"), or "White Fish," a sub-genus of the *Cyprinidæ* family. Hence our Chub is called *Cyprinus* or *Leuciscus*, with the additional title of *Cephalus*, which has been given to him on account of the size of his "head"—in the Greek *kephalos*, (κέφαλος) Latinized into *cephalus*. The etymology is clear enough; but I take the liberty of strongly objecting to it. I never thought

the fish happily, or indeed fairly, named; for though he certainly has a large head, it is not so abnormally large as to justify this feature being fixed upon to give him a distinctive appellation. A small chub is so like a dace (one of the most symmetrical fish that swims) that unless one knows ichthyologically the different marking of the fins, it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other; and when he has grown to full chubhood his head, though large, does not seem much, if at all, out of proportion to his body. Take a five-inch chub and a five-inch dace in your hand, or contemplate a "Cut" of chub and dace, and you will not notice any great difference as to the proportionate size of their *heads*. The chub has been sometimes called "The large-headed Dace;" but I question the propriety of the nomenclature. I know there is a variety of opinion as to the claims of the chub to be a good-looking fish. The learned Dr. Badham, to whom I have so often referred in my notes, only devotes three lines to this fish, and speaks with apparent contempt of his "obese body, empty head, and inflated face," and suggests that these "fishy" characteristics "helped the Stratford bard to the simile" contained in the following lines:—

> "I never saw a fool lean; the *chub-faced* fop
> Shines sleek with full-cramm'd fat of happiness."

Now I shall venture to say that, in my opinion, Dr. Badham is as unkind towards the personal appearance of our chub as he is certainly incorrect in attributing his quotation to the "Stratford bard," for it was *not* Shakespeare who wrote the lines, but Marston, the dramatist, and friend of Ben Jonson, in his *Antonio's Revenge*.

Another writer says, "The chub is a strong, compact, but rather clumsily-built fish." This is less abusive, but hardly flattering to our *Cyprinus cephalus*. Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, I see, though he speaks of the chub as "somewhat slow and clumsy in its movements and appearance," yet adds that he is "withal a stately and handsome fish when large and in good condition;" and Mr. Francis boldly begins his chapter on chub thus: "The chub is a well-shaped, handsome-looking member of the carp tribe." Indeed, I think a chub, say of 3 lbs. or 4 lbs., is altogether one of the best-looking fresh-water fish we have, and more symmetrical than his big cousins the carp, the barbel, or the bream. It is a downright libel to stigmatize his head as so monstrous and ill-shapen, though I must admit his mouth is a little too big to be proportionate, and that he *looks* somewhat big-headed when you confront him "full-face." I feel quite angry with a class of piscatorial writers who invariably call chub "loggerheads," though they have Walton's authority for the term. It is an opprobrious name, which of course attributes to the chub a head as thick, heavy, and misshapen as a *log*. However, I do not for a moment suppose that any protesting on my part will put down this unjust appellation. It is no use kicking against the pricks; and even if I could get the term "loggerheads" universally suppressed, *cephalus* and "chub" would still stick to our *Leuciscus*. Indeed, there seems a general etymological conspiracy among nations to designate this fish, so to speak, by his "head." Thus, in the old Saxon, we have him called *cop* or *oopp*, which is evidently connected with *caput, kephalos, cephalus*. Then there is the

French *chabot*, by which name the fish is called across the Channel; and even the harmless Swedes term him *kubb*, which signifies a "short and thick piece of wood," and, applied to the fish, is their equivalent to our "loggerhead." "Cheven," "chevin," or "chavender" are the names by which old Father Izaak delighted to call him, and by the two first of which he is still known in some districts—names connected with the above, or coming more direct perhaps from the French *chef*, a "head," from *caput*, though only used metaphorically. The Welsh perpetuate the libel by calling the chub *penci*, "pen" meaning a "head;" but what is the origin of their other term for him, *cochgangen*, I know not. Nor do I know whence a writer in the *Daily Telegraph*, in a recent article on fishing, gets the term "chuckle-headed," which it pleases him to apply as a term of reproach to the poor chub. The Scotch call him *skelly*, which (I shall hazard the conjecture) is a form of "skully," from "skull." Quære,—Can there possibly be any connexion between *chub* and *cherub?* Cherubs, according to the paintings of old masters, have "chubby" (cherubby) faces, i. e., *pleasantly fat*. And can it be possible after all that our forefathers gave the name *chub* to the fish by way of compliment, and to signify that he was the *cherub*-fish, or fish with the *sweet fat face?* But here I must stop my etymological pen.

Ichthyologically, there is not much to be said of the chub; but it has often struck me, on looking at one of these fish, that they are wanting in distinctiveness as a class. I do not mean to suggest that they are hybrids, but they seem to me to want the marked differences which distinguish most other fish, and to present a kind

of nondescript appearance (as I have remarked of the grayling), which may almost be called a mixture of roach and dace with a dash of carp. But perhaps this again is a mere fancy. The worst that can be said of a chub is that he is a somewhat coarse and vulgar-looking fish, and has an ugly mouth when you look at him straight in the face. Chub spawn generally early in May, after which they betake themselves to the most rapid parts of the river. Towards the middle of June they move into deeper and quieter waters, preferring those overhung by trees and bushes. The almost black tint of the back and tail fin specially distinguish the chub from his cousins the roach and dace.

Chub are found in most rivers in England; seldom in lakes or ponds, unless a small stream finds its way through them. A moderately swift stream seems to suit them best; but they abound also in many rapid trout and salmon rivers throughout the kingdom, much to the annoyance of anglers when intent on higher game; for what is a chub, be he a very monster of his kind, when compared with *Salmo salar* or *Salmo fario?* The parts of rivers they affect are deep quiet holes, overhanging banks, especially where there are old piles, brickwork, and planking, or a gentle run beneath the boughs of trees; but it should be noted that they like a gravelly bottom, and eschew mud. At times, however, it pleases them to frequent swift shallows, mill-races, and the rushing waters of the weirs, particularly when cleaning themselves after spawning in the month of June, as Thames anglers are aware. It is in July and August that they especially frequent the water beneath boughs, but later on they are more or less in the barbel swims and

in water of medium depth outside lines of overhanging boughs.

Chub grow quickly, but seldom attain the weight of barbel, carp, or even bream. On the Continent ten-pound fish are to be met with, but I doubt whether there is a chub of this weight in her gracious Majesty's dominions. Seven pounds would probably be the highest weight they attain here; and in the Thames, which is perhaps as good a chub river as we have, I would venture to say that there are not a score of seven-pounders between Teddington and Cricklade. A six-pound fish is a veritable prize for an angler, and a five-pounder a great triumph. Piscator may be well content with one of 4 lbs. As regards the Thames, I fancy that there are not nearly so many or so large chub as there were twenty-five years ago, when a five or six pounder was not the rarity it now is. This, I think, is partly to be accounted for by the increase of rowing-boats on the river, and especially of the anglers' abominations, the steam launches. The chub is essentially a shy fish, and will not flourish where he is much disturbed. Perhaps, too, the stock is kept down by the increased number of anglers who make the chub their special quarry. The fact, however, is to be noted as a singular one, for I believe that this is the only kind of fish which in the Thames has decreased in numbers of late years.

The gastronomical paragraph now follows in due course, but it shall be a short one, for in my previous denunciations of several of our "coarse" fish as articles of food I have, by anticipation, condemned the chub. I am ready, as I have shown myself, to support the chub against his nicknamers and the detractors of his outward person;

but I have not a word to say in favour of his flesh, boiled, fried, or broiled. Walton seems "to beat about the bush" as regards the edibility of a chub, and as he dramatizes his discourse, he has every facility for so doing. Says "Venator,"—"Oh, sir, a chub is the worst fish that swims;" to whom in answer "Piscator,"—"Though a chub be by you and many others reckoned the worst of fish, yet you shall see I'll make it a good dish by dressing it." After the "hostess" has dressed it, and grace has been said, and the anglers have "fallen" to their supper, "Venator" is made to say, "'Tis as good meat as I ever tasted." But later on, when "Piscator" (Walton) discourseth more fully on the chub, he saith, "The chub, though he eat well thus dressed, yet as he is usually dressed, he does not. He is objected against, not only for being full of small forked bones, dispersed through all his body, but that he eats waterish, and that the flesh of him is not firm, but short and tasteless." On another occasion, when "Venator" asks, "What shall be done with my chub?" "Piscator" answereth, "Marry, sir, it shall be given away to some poor body." A dictionary I have just referred to is somewhat cautious, and says, "It is not considered a great dainty." A modern angler of the highest repute, who does his best, gastronomically, to uphold fresh-water fish, and at whose house (cold) roach baked in a pie-dish with spices and bay leaves are often on table, declares against the chub as "watery, coarse, and tasteless;" but, after referring to Izaak Walton's recipe for cooking him, says that "small chub of some half-pound weight, if crimped and fried dry, are not so bad as the fish is generally represented." Another writer, with whom I am much more

in accord, says, "His flesh is woolly and watery, and has a nasty sweetness about it which is absolutely nauseous." The French call the chub "*un vilain*," and if they, who can make a toothsome dish out of almost anything or nothing, gastronomically condemn him, who shall dare to say a word in his favour? However, as I have remarked in reference to other fish, anglers will insist on eating of their spoil. Let them, therefore, clean this fish as soon as possible after being taken, split open, rub with salt or lemon, and then dry for some hours before cooking; and, above all, let them remember that a chub *kept for a single night uncleaned is absolutely unedible.*

From an angler's point of view, the chub, as a fish for sport, is by no means to be despised, though he is not so strong, plucky, and determined as some others when hooked. Izaak Walton, had evidently a special fancy for fishing for the wary "chevin," probably because he appreciated its fairly sportive character. There is this peculiarity about the chub, namely, that no other fish can be captured in such a variety of methods and with such a variety of baits. On the Thames they are frequently taken in the month of May when spinning or using a live bait for trout. Not that the angler wants them then; for, in the first place, they are not in season, and in the second they cause him painful disappointment by inspiring the hope that he has hooked a veritable Thames trout. If there be a time and justification for applying the opprobrious term "loggerhead" to a chub, it is when he attaches himself to your line in place of the much-desired *fario.*

July and August are the months for fly-fishing for chub

on the Thames; and the morning and evening, especially the latter, are the best times of the day; but when the fish are in a rising humour they will take the fly all day long, and that, too, under the most brilliant sun. You may rise chub on the shallows and in mid-stream; but in the months just mentioned they are mostly under boughs, when the stream is not too rapid. You must, however, know their special haunts, or have some one with you who does. You must be a good hand, too, at casting a fly, for it is necessary to keep at a pretty long distance and to drop your "deceit" as near the edge of the boughs as possible; indeed, if you can drop it on a bough, or rather an outside leaf, and then by a tremulous shake of the line cause it to fall like a natural fly into the water, so much the better chance have you of luring a fish from his hover. There are a variety of flies which come under the denomination of chub flies, some made to imitate the natural insect and some "fancy" flies. They must, however, all be large and well hackled. The "Marlow buzz" and the "Marlow crow" are two well-known flies; and Mr. Pennell's "sweep" is undeniably good; but black and red "palmers" will generally do execution. But whatever fly you use, attach to the bend of the hook a narrow strip of white kid, about half or three-quarters of an inch long. There is some occult reason, which perhaps some day may be explained, why this appendage adds attraction to the fly; it certainly is the case, as those especially well know who have fly-fished for the rudd at Slapton Lea. Most men use a double-handed fly-rod for "chubbing," but I have found a single-handed one do very well, and it saves a great deal of labour on a hot day. When you have a careful man to punt or row you gently down stream, keeping you

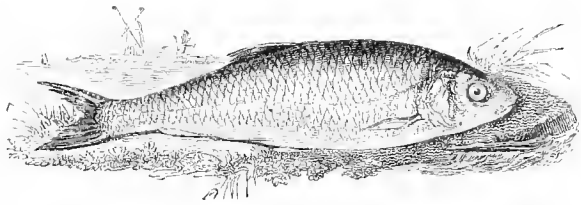
at a proper distance from the boughs, and the chub rise fairly, the sport is by no means to be despised.

During July and August, too, "daping," or "dapping" (connected, I suppose, with the verb to "dab"), is in vogue for chub; but it wants a master of the art to practise it successfully. Consummate observation, caution, care, and patience are part of the stock-in-trade needed. Old Walton was evidently a "dapper." To secrete oneself and get one's bait into the water, clear of boughs and bushes, without scaring the most shy, perhaps, of all fish, and then work it properly, will tax the powers of the best of anglers. For "daping" all sorts of creatures are used, such as cockchafers, grasshoppers, beetles, large flies of all kinds, humble bees, *et id genus omne*, not forgetting the lively frog. I have the highest regard for a good "daper," partly, perhaps, because I have not the patience and perseverance to be one myself.

Chub are often caught in considerable quantities when roach-fishing, and on the leger when barbel-fishing with lobworms. But float-fishing for chub according to the Nottingham method with the "traveller" is, after fly-fishing, the most artistic and often the most successful method of capturing our *Cyprinus cephalus*. For this you want a moderately swift swim, about three to five feet deep and with a level bottom, and it should run along a line of boughs or bushes. When chub are fairly on, for this style of fishing almost any baits will answer, but greaves, cheese, and "pith" are the best. The latter has shown itself a very killing bait of late years, being the spinal marrow of a bullock, and with this bullock's brains should be used as ground-bait. They require, however, some preparation before use, and this is

best left to your fisherman, who will in the orthodox manner chew and spit from his mouth the brains for groundbait while you are fishing. By this method the largest takes of chub are had, and the largest fish caught.

There is more than one English family which has the chub as part of its heraldic devices; and Mr. Chubb, the world renowned lock and safe maker, and at the same time a most enthusiastic angler, has adopted the fish as his "trade-mark."



NOTE XIV.

THE ROACH.

(*Cyprinus Rutilus, or Leuciscus Rutilus.*)

"*The Roach, whose common kind to every flood doth fall.*"
MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"*Unwary Roach the sandy bottom choose.*"

ANOTHER *Leuciscus*, and a fish which seems as difficult to describe as a grayling. Yarrell assigns to the roach many more colours than are in the rainbow. Thus: "The colour of the upper part of the head and back is dusky green, with blue reflections, becoming lighter on the sides, and passing into silvery white on the belly; the irides yellow, cheeks and gill-covers silvery white; dorsal and caudal fins pale brown, tinged with red; pectoral fins orange red; ventral and anal fins bright red; the scales are rather large, marked with consecutive and radiating lines." Another description makes his head "bluish green," his dorsal and caudal fins "dusky, tinged with red;" the anal, pectoral, and ventral fins "bright red," and the irides "bright yellow." Another, his back "greenish." Another says that the roach "is known at once by his bright red colour, and especially by the marked redness of his eye;"

while Mr. Pennell observes that "the prevailing colour of the roach is silvern."

From the above it will be seen that there is no small difficulty in describing the roach chromatically; and I imagine that a painter who had never seen a roach, and had only these and other descriptions before him, would have some trouble in colouring his subject. But this need not distress us. Most of us know pretty well what a roach is like, and, descriptionally, we need not be nice to a shade.

I must, however, humbly submit some objections to his ichthyological name—*Leuciscus rutilus*. Of course, he is rightly called *Cyprinus*, for he is an undeniable *carp*, as to family. I can allow the propriety of *Leuciscus*, or "white" fish, for he is a white fish—and so, by the way, are some others which are not called *Leucisci*; but as for *rutilus* appended, if it is used in its original signification of "red," with the further idea of inclining to a golden yellow (see Latin Dic.), the term is not a happy one. Though he has some *red* about him, he has hardly enough to warrant *rutilus* as a distinctive appellation. He is not nearly so markedly red as, for instance, a perch is as to his fins. He is *not* "known at once by his bright-red colour," as one of the authors above quoted says.

The rudd, which is sometimes confounded with the roach, has a far better title to be called *rutilus*, for his eyes and fins are tinted with different shades of red, crimson, and orange scarlet, and his prevailing tint is golden with a reddish-orange hue. If the roach is to be called *rutilus*, the rudd has a right to be called *rutilior*, though perhaps he may for the present be contented with the classical name given him, *erythropthalmus*, which

signifies "red-eye," according to its Greek etymology. By the way, fishermen who want to make the special acquaintance of rudd had better betake themselves to Slapton Lea, and fly-fish for them on the sandy shallows in the summer months. I am almost afraid to say how many score I have taken there in a few hours with a single-handed fly-rod and common red-palmer fly, but remember with a small piece of white kid glove the size of a gentle flying on the bend of the hook. *Erythropthalmus* at Slapton runs up to 2 lbs., is fairly sportive, but is such an easy prey to the seductive kid, that fishing for him loses part of its interest. The Rev. Moses Browne thus sings the rudd:—

> "The rud, a kind of roach, all tinged with gold,
> Strong, broad, and thick, most lovely to behold."

But to return to the term *rutilus*. If it is applied to the roach in its secondary meaning, as "shining," "glittering" (again see Latin Dic.), it is a weak term; for though the roach is "shining" and "glittering" enough in his way, there are many fish more so in theirs. I always have looked on our friend as a bold and handsome fish, whatever be the propriety of his Latin name or the true description of his colouring; and I have always had an idea that he looks a *masculine* fish, while the silver-dace (*Leuciscus vulgaris*) looks *feminine*, though by no means "common" or "vulgar;" and the chub (*Leuciscus cephalus*) neuter. But perhaps this is a mere foolish fancy. Our roach is also called the "red dace;" and perhaps, after all, he is called *rutilus* simply from the colour of his fins.

And now I am on the edge of another etymological

pitfall. Why is the roach called the "roach"? A very good answer to this is because he always has been called the "roach." Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers called him *reohha, reohche, heoce;* the Dutch *rog, roch;* the Danes *rokke;* the Swedes, *rocka;* the Germans, *roche* and *ruche.* This is "good enough;" and I do not care to go farther afield.

But I must further ask whence the origin of the saying, "Sound as a roach"? I do not know that the roach is sounder than any other fish; but I do know that he is subject to more piscine diseases than the majority of them. Dr. Badham, in his *Fish Tattle,* says that the proverb, "Sound as a roach," has its origin from our friend's "frisky movements, which have caused him to be considered as the fit emblem of robust health." Oh, most learned and most amusing Fish Tattler! You must be wrong for once; or are you only having a joke with your readers? You cannot be really serious! Your explanation is not as "sound as a roach" or "as a bell." It sounds like a bull. You only escape the righteous indignation of all reasonable beings by mentioning in a note another explanation, which refers the proverb to the reputed power of St. Roche miraculously to cure diseases, whence "sound as a roche" by metonymy meant "sound as one of St. Roche's patients," and was afterwards corrupted into "sound as a roach." In the older ichthyological works our *Leuciscus rutilus* was called *roche,* and it is by no means improbable that the original and true reading of the proverb was "sound as a *rock,*" from the French *roche.*

Our *Leuciscus,* humble fish though he be, is found, like other fish, in heraldry. He honours, or is honoured by,

the family of De la Roche, which bears "three roach naiant in pale, argent," for its arms.

The size a roach will attain is easily stated—seldom 2 lbs., never 3 lbs.—though I have a record in print of one exceeding the latter weight by 1oz., and said to have been captured in the Lea in November, 1875, and therefore those who always believe what they see in print will accept the statement as a fact. I know, also, that Pennant records a roach of 5 lbs.! Some years ago a reward was offered by the Piscatorial Society for a 2 lb. fish, but whether this was limited to Thames roach or not, I cannot remember. That 2 lb. roach exist in many waters, and that many over this weight have been caught during the last year or two, is certain. Some little time back a brace over this weight were exhibited, preserved in a case, in the window of the *Field* office. I do not know that a Thames roach has been caught scaling over 2 lbs. I certainly never caught one of that weight in my favourite river nor elsewhere, nor have I ever seen one caught; but I well remember one April, some years ago, when fishing the trout and grayling waters about Wilton, that cart-loads of white fish were netted out of the Nadder and Wylie, and were lying in heaps on the banks; and I can safely say that there were scores of roach among them over this desirable weight. A half-pound roach is a sizeable fish; a pounder should make the angler's heart rejoice; and he may consider himself a piscatorial hero for the remainder of the season, or, indeed, for the term of his natural life, when he baskets one of 2 lbs. If he captures one of 3 lbs., he deserves to be put in a glass case as much as the fish. The roach varies considerably in shape, according to his size. When about a quarter of a pound, he is not a deep fish; in

fact, not much deeper than a full-sized dace. The cut at the head of this Note may be taken to represent such a fish. But as he progresses towards 2 lbs., he becomes almost as deep as he is long.

The roach gastronomically is "flat, stale, and unprofitable." I hand him over, with all his flabby, woolly fibre, his innumerable and strong bones, and his supremely muddy flavour, to enthusiastic Christian ichthyophagists and to the Jews. Indeed, "Porcis (or *paucis*, which will do just as well) comedenda relinquo." Dame Berners says, "Yf he be fatt . . . . thenne is he good mete;" and other authors, from her time downwards, have commended the roach. But they do not influence me with their commendations, and I am proof even against the word of one of the best anglers, best sportsmen, and most learned opsophagist in the kingdom, who assured me that roach baked in layers in a pie-dish, with bay-leaves and a little spice between them, were most excellent. I had not even the enterprise to taste the dish (cold) which was on his breakfast-table one morning, so definitely is my mind made up on the subject. Anglers of the "working class" eat them, and say they like them, but anglers, as I have more than once remarked, often feel compelled to take this line. I do not think their children will say the same thing—at least, they won't feel the same thing—after being properly and æsthetically educated by the omnipotent School Boards. Even Walton shrinks from a roach, and says, "He is a fish of no great reputation for his dainty taste."

The art of roach-fishing rightly holds a high place in the angler's estimation. Any one can catch the half-bred and half-starved roach of a muddy and weedy pond, and

I dare say Dame Berners spoke rightly of the uneducated fish of her day when she said "the roche is an easy fysshe to take." Probably too Walton was justified in speaking of the roach of his day as being "accounted the *water-sheep* for his simplicity or foolishness." But a river roach, say of the Thames, or Colne, or Trent, of our era is a very different fish, and he is not to be had by any tyro. He has, too, his times and seasons, his "offs" and "ons," and the general capriciousness of the scaly tribes, being subject to all kinds of atmospheric and terrestrial influences, which affect both the time and manner of his taking a bait. Moreover the roach of a much-fished river like the Thames are highly educated now-a-days, and are pretty wide awake to the fisherman's proceedings, the fixing of the punt, the plumbing the depth, and the scattering of the ground-bait. Of course the latter attracts them, and they come to "see what's up," and if inclined to feed they will constantly take the baited hook for an innocent morsel of favourite food. But to make a good basket of roach even when they are "on" requires very careful attention to a number of details. You must have a good "swim," fish at the exact depth, use fine tackle, and in striking have the gift of the regular "roach nick." Walton says, "When you fish for roach you must have a small hook, a quick eye, and a nimble hand." This holds good now, and much more too which Father Izaak writ; but if it is not a reflection on the memory of the dear old angler of Fleet Street, I am inclined to think, if he were restored from the shades for a few days' angling, it would "take him all his time" in this latter half of the nineteenth century to make as big a bag of Thames or Lea roach as he often did when in the flesh. Old hands still swear by the

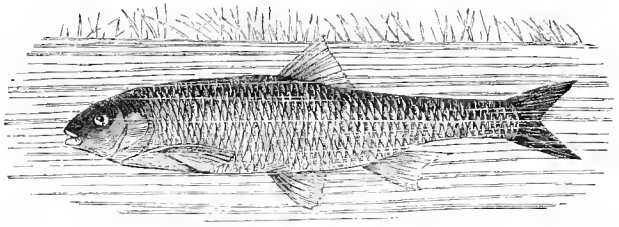
traditional single horsehair bottom, but gut can be got with a little trouble as fine as hair, and it does not "magnify" in the water—certainly not if it is *slightly* stained. It is a matter of great importance that your float is suited to the strength of the stream; and in slow and clear waters a "self-cocking" one is often used with effect, as you then get rid of the line of "chain-shot," which makes the bait sink too rapidly, and also frightens the fish by its unnatural appearance. Strike sharply, shortly, and decisively, but *not violently*, directly the top of the float is level with the water, the top never being much more than an inch above it, except when *rutilus* is troubling it. No slack line between your float and the top of the rod, or you are no artistic roach-fisher.

Use ground-bait but moderately, and if possible bait a swim or two the day before you fish it. Gentles, paste (I don't believe in scented pastes), and in the winter brandling worms as well, are your baits; and remember, there is a great art in baiting. Your hook should always be well covered but not overloaded, and don't be too idle to put on a fresh bait pretty frequently. Sodden gentles and worms have no attraction for a roach of taste and education. Good roach are often taken in the Thames when you are legering or "Nottingham" fishing with a lobworm. The bait should be about three inches, or less, from the bottom in a river, but not so deep in a pond. Some anglers fish on or as near the bottom as they can. I don't hold with them. It is all very well to fish on the bottom for barbel and gudgeon. Their mouths *look* downwards, and are on the bottom. The roach has a deep belly, and cannot take a bait at the bottom without standing on his head, and this I do not think he is in the

habit of doing, like tench and bream. Perhaps he has recourse to this position in an emergency, but it must be as uncomfortable for him to feed thus situated as it would be for an alderman to convey his turtle to his mouth if his plate were directly under his abdomen. Those who want to know all about "How to angle for roach" had better consult a book on practical angling: and though it may appear somewhat rash to recommend a book I have never seen, I would refer them to Mr. Pennell's *Book of the Roach.* If it is anything like his *Book of the Pike,* it must be exhaustive of the subject. Mr. Francis also devotes many pages to roach-fishing.

Let no man despise the roach-fisher. I say the roach-fisher, for there is a large class of anglers who confine their attention almost exclusively to this branch of fishing, and they rather pride themselves on the fact. They look on it as the *ars artium* in the way of angling. Their name is legion in the metropolis, and the metropolitan roach-fisher is *facile princeps* in his line now, as he was in the time of Walton, who says "About London I think there be the best roach anglers." He is skilful, patient, and, above all, most enthusiastic; though at the same time he looks on "roaching" as a most serious business. He seldom smiles while at work; and when he takes home a good bag of fish at night he carries the air of a man who is conscious of having performed well some very important *duty.* But this applies specially to the *bank* angler. The punt angler for roach is a somewhat different man. He is like his brother of the *bank,* but less serious. I like to see him in his punt, with all the paraphernalia and impedimenta for a day's fishing. He is the picture of happy determination and smiling resolve to sit the day out and

enjoy himself, come what will or won't. Somehow or other I associate him with a well-distended figure, red face, spectacles, and a white straw hat in all weathers, with a black clay in his mouth, and a stone bottle of beer in close contiguity to his ground-bait. I was once struck by an eminent roach-fisher answering this description; and so, whenever I think of a roach-fisher, I invariably think of him. Certainly there are many "Amicable Brothers" who approximate more or less closely to my type; and I believe, without exception, they are happy men, good citizens, loving fathers, affectionate husbands, sincere friends, and clever anglers.



NOTE XV.

THE DACE.

(*Leuciscus Vulgaris.*)

"*The pretty slender Dare, of many call'd the Dace.*"
MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"*When I may see my quill or cork down sink*
With eager bite of perch, or bleak, or Dace."—JOHN DENNYS.

"THE pretty slender dare" is the typical representative of the genus *Leuciscı;* in fact he is *the* "*Leuciscus*" or "White fish;" and of course of the Carp family. As I have already intimated in my Note on chub, the dace is very like this fish; or rather, I should say, *little* dace are like *little* chub. Indeed, it is very difficult to distinguish between the two of the size or rather weight, say, of a quarter of a pound; and young anglers, and sometimes old ones, are puzzled in attempting to name their capture. I would therefore mention by the way that the chief point of difference consists in the fact that the anal fin of the chub is brilliantly pink, or, as some would say, red, while that of the dace has no red or pink about it at all. This at once decides the difficulty; but a further

difference between the two fish, and one to be easily recognized when you have them side by side, is that the dace has smaller scales than the chub.

The ichthyological name of the dace is *Leuciscus vulgaris*—i. e. the "common white fish." But whence "dace"? I am sorry I cannot answer my own question. All I can say is that the word can be traced in different languages, *da* being the characteristic letters, just as I pointed out that *br* were in the word "bream;" for I find that our dace is called *daas* in Dutch, *dard* in French, and, as my Welsh cook informs me, *darden* in Wales. The dace, too, was often called *dare* in this country, and I believe is still so called in some districts at the present day. He has also been called the "dart," probably from his quick "darting" movements, though the *da* in "dart" seems the *da* of the list of names just given. Drayton seems to have their "darting" in his mind when he thus says of the dace,—

> "Oft swiftly as he swims, his silver belly shows;
> But with such nimble flight, that ere ye can disclose
> His shape, out of your sight like lightning he is shot."

If we take the explanation of "dart" as a name given to the dace, it is somewhat after the analogy of the grayling being called the umber from "umbra," because of its flitting like a "shadow."

But whatever may have been the origin of the name, whether suggestive or not of the personal appearance of the fish, I take it that the dace is one of the prettiest denizens of our streams. It is very symmetrical; its well-turned head with pointed muzzle, its slightly arched back and semi-swallow-like tail, giving its cylindrical body a

very graceful appearance, while its silvery whiteness is its most distinguishing as well as most beautiful feature. The dace is perhaps the most *elegant* of our fresh-water fish.

Ichthyologically there is little or nothing of interest to be said of dace. They are found in suitable waters in almost any part of Europe, but no notice seems to have been taken of them by ancient authors either in this country or elsewhere. With us dace are found in almost all clear, rapid streams, whether deep or shallow, and are often a great nuisance in trout streams, where they not only devour a large proportion of the food trout feed on, but annoy fly-fishermen by attaching themselves to his fly when he is intent on nobler game. There are large quantities in many of the Welsh trout streams, as also in those of the south of England. The Thames is fairly well stocked with them, and, though as a rule they much prefer clear water, they are found in considerable numbers in the dirty tidal water below Teddington, and are caught even as low down as Hammersmith Bridge. Dace anglers, confining themselves specially, or at least as far as possible to this fish, will often capture as many as from four to eight dozen in a day. I have often wondered at dace frequenting this part of the river; but at the same time I know that they will live in a streamless pond, for I had many in such a pond a few years ago, the only change of water they got being the influx from rain, which ran off through a waste-pipe when the pond came to a certain height.

Dace seldom exceed 1 lb. in weight, indeed this may be considered their top weight; and in few rivers in England do they exceed half a pound. Bloch, however,

mentions dace caught in this country eighteen inches long. I fear that dace of this size were taken before his time. In the Thames one that scales half a pound is considered a good fish; but Thames anglers, I fancy, prefer to talk of dace by length rather than by weight. Six inches is the "regulation" size on the Thames, shorter than which it is not lawful to retain them except for the purpose of bait, but I fear the regulation (to use a very trite quotation), is—

"More honour'd in the breach than the observance."

A Thames angler may be justly proud of a dace which approximates to twelve inches.

Gastronomically, dace have but little to commend them. They are, however, in my opinion, less watery, less woolly, and less muddy than either carp, tench, barbel, bream, chub, or roach. Mr. Francis, who seems to have had a retainer on behalf of our common fresh-water fish as articles of food, says "They are a fairly delicate fish to eat when in good order, and should be broiled dry, a slice of butter being then allowed to melt upon them." An old Thames-side recipe for converting large roach and dace into "very pleasant and savoury food," ran as follows:—"Without scaling the fish, lay him on a grid-iron, over a slow fire, and strew on him a little flour; when he begins to grow brown, make a slit not more than skin deep, in his back from head to tail, and lay him on again; when he is broiled enough, his skin, scales and all, will peel off, and leave the flesh, which will have become very firm, perfectly clean; then open the belly, and take out the inside, and use anchovy and butter for sauce." Well, you can disguise anything with anchovy

sauce, especially with the slimy, rancid stuff which is now so often sold under that name; and perhaps the more you disguise the dace the better. At all events, if you are minded to eat him, do what I have recommended in the case of other fresh-water fish—clean him as soon as possible, and, after rubbing a little salt or lemon along the backbone, dry him in the open air—in the sun, if it is shining—before cooking after any fashion. I notice that Mr. Senior advocates baking dace in a jar with layers of spice, bay-leaves, and vinegar, and also pickling after the manner of fresh herrings. Our Jewish friends have a great liking for dace, and consume them in large numbers (at least when they can get them) during their "fasts."

Like the chub, the dace can be caught with a fly or by bottom fishing; and here let me give our little friend the credit of being a most sporting fish for his size. He is game to the backbone, fighting for dear life to the very end; and hence a half-pound dace affords pretty sport enough with a light, single-handed fly-rod. As they do not generally spawn till the end of May or beginning of June, according to the warmth of the season, they are hardly in takeable condition till the middle or end of July. On the Thames August is the best month for daceing with a fly. They are then on the shallows, and being a very shy, quick-sighted, and nimble fish, the fly-fisherman must be as careful as possible in his movements, and strike very quickly to a rise. Almost any small fly is to their taste, or perhaps I should say sight, black and red palmers, ditto gnats of a *small* size, duns, and cinnamons, or Mr. Pennell's small trout and grayling flies, being all serviceable. But, like chub and rudd, when they decline an ordinarily dressed fly they will often eagerly rise at one

the hook of which is pointed with a gentle, or to the bend of which a small piece of white kid resembling a gentle is attached. Mr. Francis, who is always full of expedients, based on philosophic principles, recommends a small shred of "the inner rind of a scrap of stringy bacon, a sort of compromise between the gentle and the piece of kid, as it is something to taste and not liable to be whipped off." I have tried this, and found it answer admirably. A very pleasant hour or two of a summer's evening may be whiled away on the Thames whipping for dace, either from the bank or a punt, or, better still, by wading the shallows. A novice who can look forward some day to trout and salmon fishing cannot do better than commence his apprenticeship to fly-fishing with the humble dace.

Bottom-fishing for dace is at its best in October, November, December, and January, during which months they are in the deeper swims and in the finest condition. It may be stated in a general way that the rules for roach-fishing apply to dace-fishing, except that the latter fish prefer more rapid runs, and do not care much for any sort of paste. They will take worms of almost any kind, greaves—a bait which seems to have been going quite out of fashion on the Thames of late years—and gentles; but there is nothing which surpasses a bright red worm, which should cover the hook (a small one) shank and all. The French in fishing for the *dard* frequently use a small water-worm, something like our caddis-worm, which is found in little narrow straws, like quills, and which floats on the water. They call them *porte-bois*. In dace-fishing, as indeed in all bottom fishing on the Thames, the "Nottingham" method is the most

artistic and killing, though if a swift swim be chosen, as it ought to be, there are extra difficulties attending its practice. Dace, like chub, are often taken on the leger when barbel-fishing; and considering the smallness of their mouths, it has often struck me as surprising what large baits they will manage to get within their lips. They are a perfect nuisance sometimes when the barbel are "on."

This is a short homily; but I think it exhausts almost all that can be said *re* dace, if I add that our subject, from its bright colouring, the toughness of its flesh, and its shape, is the very best spinning-bait that can be used for jack, and from its liveliness and tenacity of life the very best live-bait.

NOTE XVI.

Small Fry.

THE GUDGEON.

(*Cyprinus Gobio, or Gobio Fluviatilis.*)

"*The dainty Gudgeon, loche, the minnow, and the bleak,*
Since they but little are, I little need to speak."

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"*The little Gudgeon's thoughtless haste*
Yields a brief but sweet repast."

Translation of "Ode to Walton."

BUT I cannot, like Drayton, treat the "small fry" disrespectfully, simply because of their littleness. Not only are "little fish sweet," but they are very interesting, though not from a strictly angling point of view. The subject of this note is a specially interesting fish, and commands too the attention of no inconsiderable a body of anglers, and all lovers of a "toothsome morsel." He is, in my opinion, well worth a Note "all to himself," be it long or short; though he has not been honoured with an illustration at the head of it.

Our little friend is a true carp, with his leathery, toothless mouth, and a "barbel" at each side of it; and the Ichthyologists have assigned him to the genus *Gobio*. A

few words, then, as to his name and natural history. He was called κωβιός (*kobios*) by the Greeks, and so "*gobius*" or "*gobio*" by the Latins; and as he belongs to the *Cyprinidæ*, or carp family, his correct ichthyological appellation is *Cyprinus gobio*, or, more familiarly, *Gobio fluviatilis*, from his love of running water. The French call him *goujon*, and hence our "gudgeon," which comes as direct from "*kobios*" as "journal," through *diurnus*, does from *dies*, "a day." Our goby is certainly a pretty little fish, in shape very like his big cousin, the barbel, and with a somewhat similar facial expression his nose and mouth being suggestive of rootling at the bottom for his living, while his whole body seems enveloped in a semi-opaque pearly coat. He is a slippery and spineless little gentleman, as Ovid says of him,—

"Lubricus et spinâ nocuus non gobius ullâ;"

fat and well-liking—"præpinguis, teres," as Ausonius says, and never out of season when you can catch him. He cannot boast any great size, a seven-inch fish being very uncommon, while an eight-inch gudgeon would be worth preserving in a glass case as a veritable monster; but Pennant (who saw and heard of many wonderful things!) mention a gudgeon taken near Uxbridge which weighed a pound. The Thames Angling Preservation Society tells us that we must not take, i. e. keep when taken, a fish less than five inches, measuring from the eye to the end of the tail; but I fancy that in a day's gudgeon-fishing there would be caught more under than over this measurement. The Preservation Societies above Staines do not, I believe, lay down any measurement for

takeable gudgeon, nor can I see that there is any reason they should. We certainly want gudgeon under five inches for perch-fishing, and as long as night-lines are allowed for eels so long will small gudgeon be required by the fisherman. I should hope, however, that before long the night-line business will be discontinued altogether.

Gudgeon are found on the Continent, and abound in many English rivers; but they seem to thrive most in the Trent, the Hampshire Avon, and the Thames, with its tributary the Colne, where they like the water and the geological constitution of the bottom. They increase marvellously, spawning, it is said, no less than three times in the year; and it is a curious fact in natural history that the females outnumber the males by six to one, and thus enable *Gobio mas* to play the Mormon in moderation. I may here mention, by the way, that it is a mistake to suppose that gudgeon will not live except in running water. I put some dozens in a pond without any stream running through it about fifteen years ago, and they not only lived, but multiplied there, notwithstanding the clayey bottom and the presence of several jack in the water.

And now as to the question "how, where, and when" to fish for gudgeon. This is not answered by "anyhow, anywhere, and any-when." A piscatory poet, who wrote nearly 150 years ago, says, in reference to gudgeon-fishing,—

> "Few lessons will the angler's use supply,
> Where he's so ready of himself to die—"

The "he" being the gudgeon. Still, as for other more notable fish, there is a proper season for gudgeon, proper

tackle and bait to be used, and proper places to be resorted to. The season is July, August, and September, at least on the Thames, and even the first month might be omitted, for gudgeon are seldom well on the feed till the water may be said to have got thoroughly warm. A river like the Thames, after a cold April and May, does not arrive at the proper temperature for gudgeon-fishing in June, or even in July. The Thames takes longer to warm than to cool, and probably its temperature is higher on an average in August and September than in June and July. I have noticed, too, that gudgeon in the Thames seem each year during the last few seasons to have been getting later in coming on the feed. Such was the case particularly in 1875, to be accounted for partly by the unusually cold spring and summer months. If you want to make up a large tale of gudgeon for the sake of adding to your piscatorial reminiscences, and being able to recount how many dozen dozens you took in one day, August is your month, and the Thames is your river. The best depth of water to angle in is from four to six feet; the bottom should be clear sand or gravel without weeds; and the pitch should be where there is only a medium stream; for in very swift water your float is almost to the end of the swim before your bait is fairly at the bottom, and consequently the continual drawing home and starting afresh is irksome to the generally lazy gudgeon-fisher. You may often find a good swim from the bank, but the best gudgeoning is to be had from a punt; and if you have a professional Thames fisherman as your humble servant for the day, leave it to him to select the pitches. If *he* does not know the "wheres," you may take it for granted that *you* do

not. It is his business to know them, and as a rule he is as anxious to show you a good day's sport as you are to enjoy one. He has an eye to the "recompense of reward," as that money-loving prophet of old, and if you have a good day, you are inclined to give him a little more than the "legal fare" at the end of it; and, moreover, you will probably leave some dozens of gudgeon in the well of his punt, for which he can always get a halfpenny apiece in some neighbouring town or at some waterside hotel.

As to your tackle. This, of course, should be light, but not too light, for otherwise you are at the end of your swim too soon. A fairly heavy float travels more steadily than a light one, and therefore is properly sensitive of a bite; moreover, it admits of heavier shotting, which gets your bait more quickly to the bottom. The hook should be moderately small, and the smaller the bait on the better, as our little friend then takes it at once, instead of amusing himself by sucking it. Your depth should be so regulated that the bait is not absolutely clear of the ground, and at the same time does not drag. It should be between the two, and for want of a better term it should "trip" along the bottom as it travels down the swim. The running line should be fine, and the lighter the rod the more enjoyable is gudgeon-fishing, because it enables you to make the most of your tiny prey in feeling the play he gives you. It is best to have a rod exclusively for this sport; one of the pretty little 10 oz. rods which I mentioned on page 108, or a cheap Japanese rod, which is lighter still, but requires to be supplemented with rings and reel fittings. Yet remember that after all your tackle should be strong

enough to play something bigger than a gudgeon; for you may frequently hook a fair perch, a goodly roach, or even an errant barbel, when gudgeon-fishing.

There is some little art in striking a gudgeon, as in striking any other fish when he bites. You must not have a lot of waste line between your float and the top of your rod, and you must strike directly you see a bite, not too sharply, but yet decisively, a twist of the wrist without any movement of the forearm being all that is required. In fact, let the strike be a delicate but pronounced jerk or twitch, which shall not raise the bait above three inches or so from the bottom. It is astonishing what a difference there is between the number of gudgeon two anglers will take in a given number of bites—one will hook five out of six, another but one or two. The bait for gudgeon is a small worm or piece of worm, the pungent, odoriferous brandling being the best; but any small red worm will answer the purpose; and at Marlow the fishermen prefer a species which they get in the weed moss and earth on the top of Marlow Weir, and which they say is not found on any other Thames weir. Old Salter says that in his time "a bit of raw sheep's liver" was the bait generally used for gudgeon; but I never hear of any one trying it now. There is no need for ground-bait, though it was an old fancy to sink in the water previous to angling a basket containing the leaves of marsh-mallows with a paste made of hemp-seed as an attraction. Raking the bottom, however, from time to time with the huge rake always carried by Thames puntsmen as part of their impedimenta, and called by the rhetorical figure of meiosis, the "small-tooth comb," certainly draws the gudgeon together in the hope of

finding various aquatic insects in the troubled water. Indeed, this raking is an absolute necessity for success, as any gudgeon-fisher well knows by experience; and therefore Mr. Blakey's remark that "in streams it is, of course, useless," is perhaps one of the strangest observations ever made in a book which professes to give definite instructions for angling. The Thames fishermen call the process "scratching their backs," i. e. of the gudgeon.

But let it not be supposed that even in July, August, and September gudgeon are always in the humour for feeding. They are capricious, like most other fish, and subject more or less to mysterious atmospheric influences which affect their disposition to bite. When, however, they are thoroughly in the humour the fun is "fast and furious," and three or four rods will often take as many as forty to sixty dozen in a day, and even more. So greedy are they, and so easily captured on propitious occasions, that they have enriched our language with the verb to "gudgeon," Sir Walter Scott speaking of a person as "gudgeoned out of the opportunities given him." Swift defines a human gudgeon as "a person easily cheated and ensnared," and Gay sings,—

"What gudgeons are we men,
Every woman's easy prey!
Though we've felt the hook, again
We bite, and they betray."

Thus the suggestion in Hood's "Angler's Lament," is a pure poetic fiction, when he says,—

"At a brandling once gudgeons would gape,
But they seem to have alter'd their forms, now.
Have they've taken advice of the Council of Nice,
And rejected the Diet of Worms, now?"

For, as Dr. Badham quaintly says, "A gudgeon is as incapable of refusing a lively young brandling when it falls in his way, as a lion a succulent kid."

But to the credit of our little fish, let it be added that he is not only a bold biter, but a bold fighter when hooked. As John Williamson, an angler-poet, 1740, (whose name, by the way, I did not include in my list of such poets in the Note on Fishing Literature), says,—

> "Tho' little art the gudgeon may suffice,
> His sport is good, and with the greatest vies."

For his size he is as strong and vigorous as a barbel, and quite after the style of a barbel, which, I hold, is the most powerful and most resistant of capture of all our fresh-water fish; he makes his rushes and persistent borings downwards with a pluck and endurance which excite the angler's admiration. Indeed, if we multiplied, say a 3 oz. gudgeon up to the weight of a 3 lb. barbel, adding a proportionate increase of fighting power, I doubt whether any ordinary barbel tackle could hold him.

Let no one, therefore, despise a day's gudgeon-fishing. Where is there a happier party in the wide world than paterfamilias, materfamilias, and a lot of master and miss-familiases in a Thames punt engaged in this sport? I must confess I don't like children in a punt, for the simple reason that I am in a state of continuous trepidation lest one or other should fall overboard; but if I wish to make young people supremely happy, I take them for a day's gudgeoning expedition. Nor need full-grown, bearded men think lightly of gudgeon-fishing. There are many worse recipes for "spending a happy day" than taking a Thames punt and giving up oneself body and soul to this

sport, which is far more fascinating than many might imagine. As an instance of this, Daniel, in his *Rural Sports*, tells the story (and it must be retold in every book about angling, like the story of Antony and Cleopatra) of a certain Vicar of Thames Ditton who was engaged to be married to a daughter of the Bishop of London, and to pass away the earlier hours of his wedding-day betook himself to his favourite amusement of gudgeon-fishing. He became so deeply interested in his pursuit that he entirely forgot what ought to have been the great crisis of his life, till after the canonical hour had passed. He was consequently late in presenting himself at the church, and the lady, in a fit of indignation, broke off the match with a man who "preferred his basket to his bride." Who can doubt the fascination of gudgeon-fishing when we are told that our great Sir Isaac Newton was a gudgeon-fisher, to say nothing of other "small fry," as Bacon, Gay, and Hollinshed, who indulged freely in this sport?

It is said, and I believe with a great deal of truth, that ladies, when they take kindly to the gentle art, make better gudgeon-anglers than men. They soon learn that it is not correct to use both hands to the rod, and at a bite to heave the line out of the swim with a long continuous pull, and throw it over their heads into the water at the other side of the punt, or to jerk the tackle into the faces of their companions; and when once they have acquired the art of striking with the wrist, they become adepts in gudgeon-fishing, their delicacy of hand standing them in good stead. Last autumn, at Marlow, I gave a lady her first lesson in gudgeon-fishing. She had never had a rod and line in her hand before, and had, or pretended to have,

an aversion to fishing altogether. But she soon learnt the art of a sharp but gentle stroke, and, what is more, she soon became fascinated with the amusement. Eight dozen and a half of gudgeon were our reward for about three hours' fishing beneath the lovely beech woods below the lock; and of these two dozen and a half were her share of the sport—a pretty fair performance for a beginner. I have already had my say about angling for ladies and ladies for angling, but I must press upon the fair sex the claims and charms of gudgeon-fishing—I mean fishing for aqueous *gobios*, and not for the biped "gudgeons" mentioned in the stanza just above quoted from Gay. It is a *very* "gentle art" for them to practise; "gentle" at least when they have mastered it. I cannot expect, judging from my experience of those whom "Mrs. Brown" calls "fieldmales," that they will ever be very patient or undemonstrative anglers, as we men are, for though they are credited, and I believe justly, with bearing bodily pain more quietly than we do, they cannot for the life of them refrain from giving marked demonstrations indicative of their mental sensations, and never will. The capture of a gudgeon cannot fail to elicit a long speech and explanation, accompanied by gesticulations of joy, while, on the other hand, the loss of one must be accompanied with very audible lamentation and the wringing of the hands of vexation. Of one of the sex it was written,—

> "She never complains, but her silence implies
> The composure of settled distress."

It will never be so in gudgeon-fishing by ladies; and if the little *gobios* were easily scared, there would not be a single fin left in the swim five minutes after the "pitch"

had been made. But after all why should I object to these demonstrations on the part of lady anglers? They like to make them. The cavaliers in attendance will not be distressed at them; and as for our little *gobio*, I am sure he is only too happy to be taken by fair anglers, for is it not written—

"Et piscatorem piscis amare potest"?

And this leads me to pen a few words of caution on the "Dangers of Gudgeon-Fishing," to those who attend the lady anglers, and instruct them in the piscatorial art. Of course under certain circumstances there may not be *much* or indeed any danger at all, as it was in my case when giving a lesson in gudgeon-fishing to the lady at Marlow. The lady happened to be my wife, the mother of six children of all sexes, ages, and sizes, and if we live a little longer we shall celebrate our "silver wedding." But, as Earl Beaconsfield has portentously observed, "Circumstances alter cases," and I know no more dangerous work than to go gudgeon-fishing "with a bevy of fair girls," unless it be with *one*, and even she (if this be grammar) under the lynx eyes of a mother, married sister, or fretful, jaundiced chaperon. Many a heart has been irretrievably lost when gudgeon-fishing. Water seems a special conductor of the gentle, and often ungentle, passion, whether it be yachting, boating, a river picnic, or fishing, which "brings the young people together." Fishing, and especially gudgeon-fishing, is replete with danger, so many are the opportunities it affords of little attentions and graceful acknowledgments. It is almost hopeless to try and resist the concomitant influences. The "stars in their courses" are against you or *with* you, just as you

view the matter; their power is irresistible. It is the old, old story. A very innocent amusement may be gudgeon-fishing with a lady, but—

"Dum capimus capimur."

Our lessons in gudgeon-fishing, and our "delicate attentions" have done their work, and as Waller sang of lady anglers generations ago—

"At once victorious with their lines and eyes,
They make the fishes and *the men* their prize."

Moral—after the manner of the elder Weller—"Beware of lady gudgeon-fishers."

And now to descend from—I will not say "the sublime to the ridiculous"—the etherial heights sacred "to Venus and her Boy," to the terrestrial plain on which I must cook and eat my gudgeon! Painful in a certain sense, but absolutely necessary if this Note is to be written "on the same lines" as those which have preceded it; and I must confess that the culinary merits or demerits of the fish we anglers fish for, have always been a subject of much interest to me. Let me say, then, that, in my humble opinion, however mean a fish the gudgeon may be thought whereon to exercise the angler's skill, he is worthy of all commendation as a fish for the angler's table, and indeed the board of the most fastidious *gourmet*. There are few freshwater fish worth the salt with which they must be eaten, if eaten at all, but opsophagistically I am enthusiastic about our *Gobio fluviatilis*. The ancients highly prized it. Galen places it in a conspicuous position among edible fish, both for the delicacy and sweetness of its taste and its digestibility. In more modern times,

Pope, the Thames-side poet, has sung its praises, or at least implied them. The French rejoice in it. And who that frequents the Thames, either as an angler or tourist, has not partaken of it at some river-side hotel or fisherman's cottage with infinite satisfaction?

It was probably to enjoy our fresh-water goby—*Gobio fluviatilis*—our esteemed gudgeon, and not his sea-water congener, that Ptolemy invited over to Egypt the parasite Archephon from Attica. The story, as told by Dr. Badham, is that this *bon-vivant* accepted the invitation; but when offered at supper a dish of these delicacies, let it pass without taking any. Ptolemy, utterly taken aback by this strange conduct, first stared, and then muttered to his confidant that he must have invited to his table either a blind man or a lunatic. Whereupon Alcanor good-naturedly put the guest's abstinence in a new and more favourable light, by attributing it entirely to modesty: "He saw it, sire, but deemed himself unworthy to lay profane hands upon so divine a little fish."

Gastronomically, our little *Gobio* has not degenerated since ancient days. He is still the same delicate, toothsome morsel he was in days of old, and as highly-prized by sensible epicures. It is not, however, every one who can cook him, and make him worthy of a highly educated palate. A Ude, a Francatelli, and a Soyer might easily fail, as many other most scientific *chefs* have failed, and will probably continue to fail. It is not a question of sauces, of condiment, or of "how to serve him" after the laborious fulfilment of the requirements of a lengthy recipe. The whole matter is one of extreme simplicity, just as boiling a potato, grilling a chop, or making melted butter; and hence, perhaps, the very general

failure. To the wives of professional Thames fishermen it seems specially to have been given to master the art of cooking gudgeon successfully. The chief secret, as with the cooking of all coarse fresh-water fish, is to allow the gudgeon, after being cleaned, to become dry and almost hard by exposure to sun and wind. The next important point is the quick and delicate manipulation to which he should be subjected in the frying-pan, as he becomes encrusted with egg and bread-crumbs; but a verbal description of this could not be given even by the most learned and versatile author of a most exhaustive cookery book. It is a question of fine and dexterous *touch*, and the operator could hardly say more of his performance than Dr. Lynn says of his tricks, "And that's how it's done." As cooked by any skilful wife of a Thames fisherman, by the landlady or cook of some of the "Anglers' Retreats" on the banks between Oxford and Richmond, or even by the cooks at some Thames-side villas, where still in imitation of Pope—

> "Although no turbots dignify rich boards,
> Are *gudgeons*, flounders—what the Thames affords,"

a dish of these little fish is one fit to be "set before a king." He who has not partaken of such a dish has hitherto lacked a palatal enjoyment, and has an opsophagous treat in store. Such a dish of sweet, crisp Thames fish, served "hot and hot," is little if at all inferior to one of smelts, though with all my enthusiasm I cannot say that our *Gobio* sheds the same exquisite, subtle, and withal indescribable aroma, a kind of gastronomic halo, round him, as do the transcendental little fish to which I am comparing him not unfavourably. There are some gobio-

philists indeed who aver that smelt are actually inferior to their little idol. Certain it is that Thames gudgeon when properly cooked are a most delectable dish, of which no *gourmet* need be ashamed to own his appreciation. It must be stipulated, however, that the dish be of *Thames* gudgeon, or, failing that, of his near relative from the Colne. The Mersey, the Hampshire Avon, the Kennet, and many other streams have their gudgeon in hundreds of thousands, and most estimable fish too; but when singing the praises of *Cyprinus gobio*, I sing of the *Gobio* of the Thames, which once more to repeat it, produces better coarse fish in an edible point of view than any other waters. It is really a great relief, after abusing most fresh-water fish, to be able to conscientiously speak of one in the highest terms of commendation.

I regret to hear, and indeed to have observed, or to fancy I have observed, that there is a decrease in the number of Thames gudgeon of late years. How to account for this decrease is a puzzle. The hundreds and thousands of dozens taken in the course of a season can hardly make a perceptible diminution in their numbers; and even if the number of anglers has increased, and consequently more gudgeon are taken by rod and line in a season than used to be the case, this is counterbalanced by the fact that the professional fishermen do not now catch them in their casting-nets, for the purpose of selling them to the proprietors of river-side hotels and other persons. The number caught and used for bait can hardly affect the supply. I would hope the decrease, after all, is imaginary rather than real, and that a kind of epidemic capriciousness as to taking the

angler's bait as freely as they did some years ago will account for the impression which has got abroad.

Old John Dennys, in his poetic description of Gudgeon-Fishing, written more than two centuries and a half ago, might almost be thought a versification of a day at this sport in the year of grace 1877. Thus it runs:—

"Loe, in little boat whene one doth stand,
That to a willow bough the while is tied,
And with a pole doth stir and raise the sand,
Whereat the gentle streame doth softly glide;
And then with slender line and rod in hand,
The eager bite not long he doth abide.
Well loaded is his line, his hooke but small,
A good big cork to bear the stream with all,
His bait the least red worm that may be found,
And at the bottome it doth always lie;
Whereat the greedy gudgeon bites so sound,
That hooke and all he swalloweth by and by.
See how he strikes, and pulls them up as round,
As if new store the place did still supply;
And when the bit doth die or bad doth prove,
Then to another place he doth remove."

I had almost forgotten to mention that the gudgeon, like some other more notable fish, has made his mark on heraldry; for, as Mr. Moule tells us, this fish was the cognizance of John Goujon, one of the first French sculptors in the sixteenth century.

However easy a fish a gudgeon may be to catch, he certainly puzzles the poets for a rhyme. Perhaps he is not as bad as "Timbuctoo," for which only "hymn-book too" could be found. But what fairly rhymes with "gudgeon" except "dudgeon" and "curmudgeon"? I would suggest to those who deal in such wares—"budge," "fudge," "judge," "mudge," with "he on"

added, if they want *him*. I verily believe that the poets calmly and continuously go through all the letters of the alphabet in search for rhymes, while the "general public" think they come by "inspiration"!

You see, good reader, and "gentle" angler (and perhaps "ungentle" critic), how much there is to be said about so insignificant a fish as the gudgeon, whom I have introduced under the humble heading of "Small Fry." I must leave it to you to determine how I have said it. At least you will admit I have found sufficient matter to justify my giving the gudgeon a Note "all to himself." If you think he requires a more lengthy discourse, encourage me and my publisher to issue "a second edition" of these Memoranda, and I will "let you have it" to your heart's content.

NOTE XVII.

Small Fry.

THE BLEAK—THE POPE—THE LOACH.

THE time has now come when I must serve up my fish together, so above is the first batch of Small Fry. The Bleak holds the post of honour, because he is a kind of "Triton among the minnows." Though his appearance is hardly suggestive of the fact, he belongs, like so many other of the common fresh-water fish, to the great Carp family, and to the sub-order of *Leucisci*, and hence is called by naturalists *Cyprinus alburnus*, or *Leuciscus alburnus*. The English name "bleak," also written "blay," combines the ideas of "white" and "shining," and is derived from the old Anglo-Saxon *blâc*, which signifies "white"—(the only instance I know where it can be truthfully said that "black is white," if the pun may be excused)—which again is connected with, or rather is the same word as, the Danish *blic*, and the German *blick* and *blicken*, to "gleam," "glitter," "glance," "shine," or "twinkle," which in turn is only another form of the Anglo-Saxon *blican*, of the same signification. We still have the root of the old word in "bleach"—to "whiten." Thus our little friend is the "white, glittering fish," and rightly so called, for he is white and glittering as the

most highly polished silver; and as he darts to and fro a few inches below the surface of the water, and throws himself on his side, as is his habit, he "gleams," "glances," "glitters," and "twinkles."

A pretty fish, six or seven inches his extreme length, narrow and flat above all our fresh-water fish, but symmetrical withal, he is certainly not wanting in interest. Izaak Walton, who seems to appreciate the little bleak, calls him the "fresh-water sprat"—a capital name for him, for he is very much like our pretty, oleaginous, delicate-looking, and "glittering" sea-sprat, which comes to London with the November fogs—and further says of him that he is "ever in motion, and therefore has been called by some the river swallow; his back is of a pleasant, sad, sea-water green, his belly white and shining like the mountain snow." Bleak are to be found in almost all rivers in this country which hold the other *Leucisci*, roach and dace, and in nearly all European rivers; while they disport themselves in myriads in the Caspian Sea. Our Thames is full of them. These little fish have a special interest attached to them from the fact that they were once most extensively used in the manufacture of "imitation pearls," the "nacre" from their scales being made into a lustrous paste called "essence of pearls," with which gypsum balls in the various shapes of pearls were coated, or the inside of glass beads lined. The bleak of the Seine, and many other French rivers, as Dr. Badham tells us, were immolated by tons for the purpose of obtaining this "pearly precipitate," four ounces of which demanded a pound of scales, and a pound of scales four thousand bleak, a proportion which might be represented by a whole sheep

boiled down to make a pint of mutton broth. Happily for French and English bleak, a new fish was at length discovered in the Tiber even better adapted than the ordinary bleak for this artificial pearl-making, and Rome secured the monopoly of this industry, at least in its highest branches.

It is hardly worth while to say much on fishing for bleak, as few adult anglers care to fish for them. Suffice it, then, to notice that the bleak, being a surface swimmer, or almost so, may be taken with nearly any minute fly, and best with a gentle or small piece of kid on the bend of the hook, or with a gentle or scrap of worm about ten to twenty inches under the surface. For the latter kind of fishing a tiny float may be used, but it is not needed, nor is shot on the gut. Moist bran is useful as ground-bait to keep the fish together, but this is hardly required. For his size he fights well when hooked. It is sad to think that this delicate little fish revels in foul water, the mouths of drains and sewers having a special attraction for him. He has, however, to pay the penalty of his bad taste, for, according to some naturalists, the tape-worm from which he so often suffers is superinduced by filthy water. The strange gyrations a bleak frequently is seen to perform are the result of a kind of vertigo arising from the presence of this intestinal parasite. Bleak thus affected are called on the Thames side "mad bleak."

Gastronomically I find that bleak have their admirers among ancient and modern anglers. Old Izaak says they are "excellent meat;" Mr. Pennell that, "dressed and eaten like whitebait, they make a very good dish;" and Mr. Francis Francis, that they are "very delicate eating when cooked in the way in which sprats are cooked." *De gustibus*, &c. For my own part, I hold

they are neither worth the cooking nor eating, having a muddy flavour, or, at the best, being tasteless; while they are too large to eat like whitebait, and too small to get a solid mouthful from. And yet I am tenderly disposed to this little *Leuciscus*, for with him I associate my first acquaintance with the Upper Thames, and in fishing for bleak ("Alburnos prædam puerilibus hamis,") I "tried my 'prentice hand," and took my first and self-taught lessons in angling beneath the wide-spreading branches of the old oak-tree at the Datchet end of the Eton playing fields, while yet a very small boy, but deeply enamoured of the Thames and its fishes. Young beginners may do worse in the way of getting their eyes and hands in than by fishing for bleak.

The last remark I will add of our little friend is that he makes a capital spinning bait, though his flesh is rather tender. Indeed, in spinning for Thames trout I prefer about a four-inch bleak to any other fish, as it spins so truly and "glitters" admirably. He is too easily killed to be of any value as a live bait.

The Ruff (also written Ruffe), or Pope, is another of the small fry found in the Thames and other streams, though seldom angled for. It is said that he was first noticed ichthyologically by Dr. Caius, who gave him the name of *Aspredo*, from *asper*, "rough." He is one of the *Percidæ* family, as a tyro might guess from his spinous dorsal fin, and so some naturalists call him *Perca cernua*, the title of *cernua* being given him, it is said, because "his head looks downwards,"—a most unsatisfactory explanation! By others he is denominated *Perca fluviatilis minor*; while others, again, call him *Acerina vulgaris*, making *Acerina* (from *acer*, "sharp") a genus of the

Percidæ. The ruff is very like the perch in form and habits, but his marking is almost exactly that of the gudgeon. He might almost be called a *Perco-gobio*. So suggestive is he of both these fish that some naturalists have considered him a hybrid between them.

As he is a bottom swimmer, and will take almost any kind of worm, he is often caught when angling for gudgeon, though, unlike the gudgeon, he has a slight *penchant* for mud and weeds. He cannot be called a pretty fish, having a particularly melancholy cast of countenance; but, like the gudgeon, his flesh is firm and sweet, what little there is of it on his bony structure: and Dame Juliaua Berners is justified in saying that "the ruff is a right holsome fysshe." His average length is three to four inches, and he hardly ever exceeds five. Why he was called the "Pope" I cannot imagine; but it is easy enough to see the propriety of the appellation "Ruff," which is the old English form of "rough." Our pope, with his spinous back fin, and from his general appearance, is certainly a "*rough*-looking customer," and therefore well named enough, as is also the bird of the same title, the ruff, from his "rough" collar of feathers. Ruff, when kept in an aquarium, get so deeply attached to one another that if one of a pair dies, or is taken away, the other frets to death, at least so it is said.

The Loach is a little fish of some interest, and occasionally taken when fishing for gudgeon, which it somewhat resembles in general appearance, though prettier, I think, with his more mottled sides and barred tail. Like the gudgeon, he belongs to the Carp family and the genus *Cobitis* (which word is a diminutive of *Cobios*—gudgeon). Hence he is called *Cyprinus cobitis*, and by some naturalists

Cobitis barbatula, "the bearded coby," from the barbs or wattles on his lips, which give him the appearance not only of having a beard, but also a moustache. Hence also boys by the riverside call him "Beardie," and in shallow water amuse themselves by trying to capture him under stones, from his fancy for getting beneath which he also is designated the Stone Loach.

Izaak Walton, who writes the word "loche," says he "groweth not to be above a finger long, and is no thicker than is suitable to that length," which is quite true of the loach of the Thames and clear, strong-running rivers; but there is another loach—the "common pond loach"—which will grow to double this length, and is distinguished by nearly a dozen barbels to his beard. Dr. Badham gives us some very interesting particulars about this loach, which he calls *Cobitis fossilis.* This *fossilis* delights in mud, and both smells and tastes of it.

The loach has had a reputation from of old for wondrous fecundity, and seems always to be either spawning or in roe. This had given rise to a proverb even before the time of Shakespeare, for in the dialogue between two Rochester carriers he makes one of them say to his companion, "Your chimney lie breeds fleas like a loach," which of course does not mean to imply that a loach breeds fleas, but that the carrier's chimney bred fleas as plentifully as the loach propagates its species.

The word "loach" is the French *loche,* which is said to be derived from *locher,* to "fidget," and applied to our *cobitis* in consequence of his restless, "fidgety" movements. But this is hardly the character of the river loach, for he is quiet enough generally under his favourite stones; and therefore we must presume that it was from

the habits of the common pond loach the title of "fidget" was applied to all the cousins. The "common pond loach" is certainly a "fidget," for though he buries himself under the mud, especially in chilly weather, and takes long naps there, he comes out of it pretty frequently, and amuses himself with rolling and wallowing in it till he has made the water cloudy and dirty enough to his liking. Dr. Badham says that *fossilis* invariably goes through this exercise on the approach of bad weather, and hence that some people keep loach in glass globes to act as animated barometers, for their uneasy, "fidgety" movements give notice of a coming storm some twenty-four hours beforehand. I have never had an opportunity of testing this prescience of the loach, but I know that it is very generally believed in as a weather prophet.

The loach has been well spoken of gastronomically; old Izaak considering it a "dainty dish at table," and Gesner prescribing it as an invalid's fish. But this only of the "river" loach, not of his muddy pond cousin, the "ditch or mud coby." For my own part, I think a loach very poor eating, at all events, far inferior to the gudgeon. The best thing to do with a loach when you catch one is to examine it from a naturalist's point of view, and then return it to its native element. It is useless as a live bait for jack, being too delicate to survive much rough treatment or exposure to the air. In Scotland, however, loach are used for spinning baits for lake trout, especially in bright weather; and the method of getting them is to wade up a shallow burn and spear them with a fork—by no means a difficult process, for like the ostrich, the poor little loach seem to have an idea that their whole body is concealed when the head is hidden under a stone.

NOTE XVIII.

Small Fry.

THE MINNOW—THE STICKLEBACK.

"*De minimis non curat Lex*"—"The Law regards not minims"—is an old adage, but one which I must disregard for the nonce in continuing my notes on "Small Fry," as I now come to "Nature's minim," the Minnow, so called because he is a "minim," the tiniest (Latin, *minimus*) of our fresh-water fish. The word "Minnow" is seen in the old French *menuise*, "small fish," "fry,"—from *menu* "small."

An old English name for the minnow was "pink." Thus in the "Angler's Ballad," in Cotton, we read,—

> "And full well you may think,
> If you troll with a *pink*,
> One [i. e. fishing-rod,] too weak will be apt to miscarry."

This name, it is said, was given to our little fish from the "pink" or rosy colour of its belly in summer. Or is the word really the old English *pink*, a small eye, an eyelet (*œillet*), eyelet-hole, and given as a title to the minnow on account of his smallness; or again is it the flower "pink," also *œillet* in French?

The little fish, though a humble member of the family, takes his place among the *Cyprinidæ*, or Carp, which I

have had occasion to mention so often as supplying most of our English fresh-water fish; and he is of the sub-genus *Leucisci*, or White Fish, to which the roach and dace belong. His ichthyological name is *Leuciscus phoxinus* (Cuvier), or *Phoxinus lævis*; the Greek φοξός (connected with ὀξύς — "sharp"?) signifying "pointed." Thersites, in the *Iliad*, has this term applied to his head, which was of the sugar-loaf type. But why it should be specially applied to the minnow I cannot understand, as he is no more "pointed," or sugar-loafed, as to either head or tail, than many other fish.

But never mind—what a pretty little fellow he is! Not a prettier fish disports itself in our waters. Lay one, when in full season in the height of summer, on the palm of your hand, and examine and admire him. Mark his shape—a miniature salmon in symmetrical configuration. Mark his beautiful colouring—every shade of olive, white, pale brown, silver, pink, and rosy, harmoniously blended, and producing that beautifully mottled appearance which reminds one of the mackerel and of the *Salmo fontinalis*, the lovely American brook-trout, which I hope before long will be naturalized in many of our rivers. Izaak Walton describes him in this way: "The minnow when he is in perfect season hath a kind of dappled or waved colour, like a panther, on his sides, inclining to a greenish or sky colour." These are evidently meant to be words of enthusiastic admiration, though, with all deference to our old master, somewhat unintelligible. But however we may describe him, no one with an eye to beauty can fail to admire the pretty little minim.

We may not care to angle for him now that we are full-grown, and perhaps grey-haired or bald-headed fisher-

men, but we cannot forget the interest we took in minnows when we were boys. There was a time when, to use the words of Cowper in his *Retirement*,—

> "To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
> To draw th' incautious *minnow* from the brook,
> Were life's prime pleasures in our simple view."

Minnows were probably the first fish we ever caught. And how triumphantly we used to carry them home in an old medicine-bottle, which afterwards answered as a small aquarium, till the poor little captives died, perhaps out of sheer wonderment why their native element became so hard to their lips at a given point which they could not distinguish with their eyes! As long as boys and minnows exist, there will be an irresistible attraction between the two, not indeed exactly mutual, but of the former to the latter; though in a certain sense, too, of the latter to the former, for, as I often notice on the banks of the Serpentine and round pond in Kensington Garden, the little fish cannot resist the scraps of worms offered them by the young urchins who persist in fishing these forbidden waters, even with the fear of the Royal Ranger, police, and park-keepers before their eyes. A curious fact in the natural history of minnows is that they devour their own dead—at least Dr. Badham says so—and I suppose he means literally and immediately, aud not in the sense in which we are said to eat our ancestors, when we eat the "muttons" which have grazed the herbage on their graves.

A few months ago I saw at the shop of Mr. Holroyd, 59, Gracechurch Street, a *golden* minnow, which had been caught at the mouth of the Gadd, near Rickmondsworth.

He was "as yellow as a guinea," or a *Cyprinus auratus*, from head to tail.

In none of the books I have read on fishes and angling do I remember having seen any notice of the minnow gastronomically, nor do I know any person except myself (including my family) who has eaten minnows. I came to do so in this wise. Some winters ago, during very hard, frosty weather, I was crossing a narrow wooden bridge over one of the many streams which flow through that "land of rivers of waters" about Harmondsworth and Colnbrook, in Middlesex, when I noticed a black-looking mass of minnows, tens of thousands in number, lying behind one of the supports of the bridge, huddled together so as actually to be touching one another. It might be suggested that they had thus packed themselves for the sake of warmth; but how any number of cold-blooded animals would get warmer by contiguity, I do not know. My first thought, like that of any other human savage, was how to capture them, and the second action of my mind was the determination to capture them and convert them into "whitebait." I went home at once, and got a landing-net of small mesh enough to hold these little fish, and, drawing it up sharply behind them, I landed literally a hatful. My cook did her best to cook them, frying them, of course, in batter, and my family and self to eat them; and the general verdict was that they were an excellent substitute for real whitebait, the fried batter, with the lemon and cayenne and the concomitant brown bread and butter, making, as they do with whitebait, an agreeable combination. It is quite worth while to deal with a hatful of these little *Leucisci* in this fashion when you can get one as easily as I did.

If you want them for bait—and the minnow, as all anglers know, is an irresistible lure for perch and trout—there are several ways of catching them: with a casting-net of small mesh; with rod and line in about two or three feet of water, your bait a scrap of worm or gentle on a very small hook (or even without a hook), and touching the bottom; or with what is called a minnow net. This latter "engine," as the Acts of Parliament term it, is simply a small shallow net on an iron hoop of about eighteen inches diameter, which is let down into two feet or less of water, and drawn up at intervals of a quarter of a minute or so, when the minnows which happen to be disporting themselves over it are transferred to the "upper air," if they are not pretty quick in their movements. Minnows are said to be the most inquisitive of fish, and unable to resist the temptation of investigating the net, to which it is often the custom to attach a few small pieces of red cloth, which still further excite the curiosity of *Phoxinus* and conduce to his capture. A good minnow-trap consists of a large glass jar, with a perforated metal top, and the bottom constructed like the mouth of crab, lobster, or eel pot. I believe such were made years ago, but I never saw one till the other day, when they were shown by Mr. Alfred, of Moorgate Street, at the Piscatorial Exhibition at the Westminster Aquarium. There are few more interesting inmates of a fresh-water aquarium than these pretty little fish.

Associated by some, and confused by many, with the minnow, is the Sticklebat, written "Sticklebag" by Izaak Walton, and also called "Stickleback" or "Prickle-back." Small boys almost invariably seem to my ears to pronounce the word as if it were "tiddlebat" or "tittle-

bat," and "tiddlers" is an abbreviated form. I must confess for many years to have had a very hazy perception of the difference between these two little fish; indeed, I am under the impression that for some time at least I thought they were one and the same fish. But now I "know a hawk from a hernshaw" (hand-saw), and a minnow from a stickleback, and I am happy. For the benefit of any of my readers—if I may pay them the bad compliment of supposing there is even one among them whose views are not quite clear as to the all-important and soul-engrossing difference between these two leviathans of our waters—let me say that, in the first place, they belong to two entirely distinct classes of fish, the minnow being a carp, as I have before observed, and so a member of the extensive family of the *Malacopterygii*, or "soft-finned" fish, while the stickleback belongs to the ichthyological section of the *Acanthopterygii*, or spinous-finned fish. The group, or sub-family, which claims our stickleback is the *Gurnard* group, a member of which is a common object on our fishmongers' slabs, and is reputed to contain poison in his head. The gurnard group is characterized by "sharp projecting cheeks, and cuboid heads cased in cuirasses of bony plates;" but this feature does not come out very strongly in our little friend, though there can be no doubt about his being a gurnard. Linnæus assigns him to the genus of *Gasterostei*, which, being interpreted, signifies "bony-sided" or "bony-bellied." In a rough way, it may be translated "armour-plated." There are salt-water as well as fresh-water *Gasterostei*, and naturalists discriminate between no less than six kinds of sticklebacks in our ponds and rivers. I believe the commonest in our waters is the "rough-

tailed three-spined stickleback," with bony plates along his side, with green back and sides and white belly, some of the males at certain seasons having the latter of a brilliant crimson.

The title Sticklebat, or Stickleback, is derived from the old English word *stickle*, a "spine" or "prickle," the verb *stick* in the signification of "to pierce" being the same word. In almost all languages the stickleback, which is widely distributed over all Europe, gets his name from his formidable "spines." Thus he is *épinoche* in French, *stachelfisch* and *stichling* in German, and *spinarola*, with several other "prickly" appellations, in different Italian provinces. Another name for our spiny little friend was "banstickle," from *ban*, old English for "bone," and *stickle*, "a prickle," as aforesaid.

Our minikin, who is generally under two inches in length, and never exceeds two and a half, is yet a fish of mark. He is wondrously active, pugnacious, and voracious. Bächer reports that "one will eat seventy small fish about three lines long in less than an hour."

The following is a lively sketch of the habits of sticklebacks, from the *Annals of Natural History* :—

"When a few are first turned into a tub, they swim about in a shoal, apparently exploring their new habitation. Suddenly one will take possession of a particular corner of the tub, or, as will sometimes happen, of the bottom, and instantly attack his companions. If any of them venture to oppose his sway, a regular and most furious battle ensues; the two combatants swim round and round each other with the greatest rapidity, biting and endeavouring to pierce each other with their spines, which on these occasions are projected. I have witnessed a battle of this sort which lasted several minutes before either would give way; and when one does submit, imagination can hardly conceive the vindictive fury of the conqueror, who, in the most

persevering and unrelenting manner, chases his rival from one part of the tub to another until fairly exhausted with fatigue. They also use their spines with such fatal effect that, incredible as it may appear, I have seen one during a battle absolutely rip his opponent quite open, so that he sank to the bottom and died. I have occasionally known three or four parts of the tub taken possession of by as many other little tyrants, who guard their territories with the strictest vigilance, and the slightest invasion invariably brings on a battle. These are the habits of the male fish alone; the females are quite pacific, appear fat, as if full of roe, and never assume the brilliant colours of the male, by whom, as far as I have observed, they are unmolested."

Here is another description of a most interesting feature in stickleback life:—

"I daresay it will surprise many of my readers to be told that the sticklebacks are the only British fresh-water fish that build complete nests, like birds, in which to deposit their eggs; and that during the subsequent spawning process they display in their diminutive bodies a courage, solicitude, and even affection, almost without a parallel amongst fish. If the pike is the tyrant of the water, the stickleback is certainly entitled to be called its knight errant. Now, with bated weapons, and glittering in green and purple, he tenderly woos the object of his devotion, or armed *cap-à-pie* patrols, a watchful sentinel, before her nuptial bower; now he fiercely disputes with rival claimants the possession of some favourite 'coign of vantage,' or sheathed in armour of proof and bristling with spines, charges, like a Paladin of old, through the liquid plains in search of other sticklebacks as pugnacious and more penetrable than himself."

The stickleback constructs the nest here spoken of with as much ingenuity as any bird, carrying in its mouth small pieces of plants and weeds often from a considerable distance. These, with minute particles of sand, it collects into one spot, and then smears them over with a glutinous secretion which makes them adhere together. It then presses them from time to time by a peculiar movement of the body so as to give them the required shape, fre-

quently striking the mass with its pectoral fins, as if to ascertain whether it has acquired the necessary consistency. Have I not now written enough to justify the assertion that the stickleback is a most interesting little fish? And may it not be truly said of them what Virgil in the *Georgics* says of the bees,—

> "Et magnos animos in parvo corpore versant"?
> (i.e. "They have big souls in little bodies.")

If you want to capture any for an aquarium, a scrap of worm attached to a piece of thread, without a hook, will answer the purpose. They try to swallow it "holus-bolus," and cling to it firmly when drawn out of the water. If for want of minnows you use them as bait for perch, be sure you cut off their prickles. The perch *seem* to know that they are protected from the jack by their spinous fin, and consequently are themselves more than shy of the prickly little sticklebacks.

NOTE XIX.

Small Fry.

THE MILLER'S THUMB—THE CRAYFISH.

With a few remarks on the Bull-head, or Miller's Thumb, and the Crayfish, I shall have completed my memoranda on Small Fry.

The bull-head, or miller's thumb, like the loach, ruff, minnow, and stickleback, is found in the Thames and other of our English waters. He belongs, like the stickleback, to the great family of the "spinous-finned" fish, and, like the stickleback, to the gurnard group. His sub-family is, according to the naturalists, that of *Cottus*, and his distinctive title *Cottus gobio*, which seems to suggest that he is a kind of "gudgeon," which, in reality, he is not, the gudgeon being one of the "soft-finned" tribe and a member of the "carp" family, as I have already pointed out. I believe, however, some naturalists actually hold that he is allied to the gudgeon.

Cottus gobio is not an easy fish to describe personally. He is from three to four inches in length, of which his head forms no inconsiderable a portion. He is "mottled" something like the minnow, and yet the marking is not unlike the gudgeon, though somewhat darker, or the loach, or the ruff. Indeed, he is a sort of amalgamation of all

these fish as regards his body—i. e. without its head—and if this were cut off, and the rest of him shown to an unskilled naturalist, he might be puzzled to name the decapitated trunk. It is the head of the *Cottus gobio* which is his distinguishing feature—and a very distinguishing one it is, weighing, I should think, half of his entirety. Indeed, he might roughly be described as "all head." Hence his title in the "vulgar tongue," bull-head and miller's thumb. In reference to the latter *sobriquet*, I must confess my ignorance as to the origin of the idea that a miller's thumb, or the top joint of it (to make it a title applicable to our *Cottus*), is abnormally large; but I have read (in Yarrell, I think,) that certain departments of a miller's work cause this enlargement, though I don't believe it. I remember also to have read a story of a supposititious child being placed out to nurse in a miller's family, and the question of its identity a long time afterwards hanging on the formation of its thumb; the thumb thus seeming to be considered "congenital" with millers' children. However, I will not pursue this point. It is sufficient to know that, either as a vulgar belief or as an actual fact, a miller has a thumb with an unusually large top joint; and hence the appropriateness of one of the titles of the little fish in question. "Bull-head" explains itself, the prefix "bull," as found in many words, signifying "large," "heavy," "ugly"—all combined more or less. There can be no doubt, therefore, as to the appropriateness of this appellation, for our *Cottus* is *par excellence* the most "bull-headed" of all our fresh-water fish, large or small, and is certainly entitled to be thus opprobriously designated. It is no libel, as it is to call a chub a "loggerhead."

I must resist inflicting on my readers an etymological disquisition as to the origin of the prefix "bull," much as I should like to indulge in it. Here, however, is a string of words with this prefix:—Bull-trout, bull-beggar, bull-briar, bullice, bull-dog, bull-fice, bull-finch, bull-frog. Is this prefix our "bull" (the bovine creature, ornament and terror of our meadows), which is said to come from the Anglo-Saxon *bellan*, to roar—by the way, the red deer in North Devon are said to "bell")—or is it "bull," Latin *bulla*, a "globe"—in the sense of a *large mass?* Then, again, we have an Irish "bull," a bulletin, bullet, a bully, a Pope's "bull," and a "bulrush" and a "bulwark" with only one *l*. Here is a fine field—but I leave it, only adding the remark that Dr. Johnson interprets a "bull-head" as "a stupid fellow," "a lubber." In some provinces of France our little fish receives a more insulting title than either miller's thumb or bull-head, for he is called *Tête d'âne*, i.e. "Donkey-head."

But, though he has so many opprobrious names and is troubled with a very ponderous cranium, *Cottus* is no donkey or "stupid fellow." He is a lively little chap, and "knows his way about." His dwelling, like that of the stone loach, is beneath stones, and he is partial to shallow water at a mill-tail. You may occasionally catch him when fishing for gudgeon, but not often. Your best chance is under his favourite stones, but he is quicker than the loach in making his escape. But when you do catch him there is the consolation of knowing what he is, by his head. Some persons compare him to a tadpole, but he always strikes me as being more like the classic dolphin, with which we so frequently ornament our public and private fountains.

As long ago as the days of Aristotle, and doubtless

long before him, *Cottus gobio* used to be hunted for under stones, for the sake of his meat. Dr. Badham says that it "turns to the colour of salmon when boiled, and is held a delicacy;" while Salter avers, "they are fine eating after the heads are cut off." I confess, notwithstanding my extensive gastronomical investigations, I have never tasted a bull-head; but I will the next time I have a chance, and make a memorandum of my sensations for future use. With the head off, however, there will be little left to discuss as an epicure.

A word or two anent an interesting little denizen of the Thames and its tributaries, and of other English waters—the River Cray-fish. This is not, properly speaking, a "fish," but a *crustacean*. It is our fresh-water lobster, though of diminutive proportions, seldom exceeding four inches in length. It is very like the lobster in all particulars of shape and colour, though the body is flatter and the claws rougher; and, like the lobster, it turns red when boiled. Like the lobster also, the cray periodically shuffles off his shelly coil, and gets him a new jacket; and once more, like their sea-water cousins, crays are wonderfully prolific. Crays too, like Nestor, are said to be very long-lived. According to naturalists, our little crustacean belongs to the genus *Astacus*, and is called by way of distinction *Astacus fluviatilis*, that is the "river astacus." The title "cray," which is the same as, or rather I should say another form of, "craw," our little friend being a relative of the huge "crawfish," is a corruption of the old High German *krebiz*, now *crebs*, or of the French *écrevisse*, the letters *cr* being evidently the old root.

He is found, as I have said, in the Thames and its

tributaries, but I have never caught one lower down than Datchet. Higher up he is abundant in some districts, particularly in the neighbourhood of Bisney, above Oxford. He likes clear rivers with moderately rapid stream, and he will not live in sluggish water, because it is not sufficiently aërated; and hence he cannot be kept in an ordinary room aquarium. He will die in a few minutes if covered with water in a pail, but will live for some time if he has only about half an inch of water, and for several days in damp grass or nettles. It is a strange fact that he is not to be found in any of the West of England trout streams. I suppose the reason is that these are too rapid for him. He lives on aquatic shell-fish, larvæ of water insects, spawn of fish (the rascal!), and on small fish too, when he can get them, and on animal and vegetable matter generally. He is, in fact, like his cousins, the lobsters and salt-water "craws," a kind of scavenger of the deep. His habitat is in holes among the roots of trees, in planking, in clay banks, and the openings in stone walls; and in districts where they are abundant, boys and men too, regardless of an occasional pinch from their strong nippers, or a bite from a water-rat; search them out with their hands. This is the best way of getting a basket of crays, but you must know their whereabouts. There are other methods, however, of capturing them; a line for instance, with pieces of bait attached, will draw them from their holes, and they may be scooped up with a small hand-net when intent on a dainty morsel. They are taken too in some districts in bundles of thorn-sticks with "offal" of some kind or other enclosed in them and sunk to the bottom with a heavy stone. Master Cray cannot resist the at-

traction, especially if bits of frog's flesh are among the baits, and he squeezes and worms his way into the treacherous *fascines*, which the cray-fishers haul up before he can find his way out again. Baited traps too, after the fashion of eel-traps, made of common willow-wands, or baskets like those used to catch crabs and lobsters, are also successful snares for the cray.

How strange it is that so little is thought in England of the cray gastronomically! In France, where *écrevisses* are naturally abundant, and are also extensively propagated by artificial means, they are highly esteemed, and most rightly so, for the meat from the tail is a veritable "*bonne bouche*," and the rest of the little crustacean is "pretty sucking." In Paris enormous numbers are eaten every day—the autumn is the true cray season—and they are as acceptable in the majority of other continental towns where *gourmets* do most congregate. The variety of ways of treating them for the table is infinite, but their chief use is for the celebrated *potage à la bisque*. The ancient Greeks knew their virtues, and Alexandrian crays were esteemed above others, as our "Native Whitstables" are above "Commons." The Romans, too, appreciated them, and served them in a hundred ways. And yet here in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century we despise them, and hardly care to use them even for "garnishing," though for this purpose there is hardly anything in nature which can be manipulated to better effect!

NOTE XX.

THAMES ANGLING.

"*In that blest moment from his oozy bed*
Old Father Thames advanced his reverend head—
* * * * * *
Around his throne the sea-born brothers stood,
Who swell with tributary urns his flood;
First the famed authors of his ancient name,
The winding Isis and the fruitful Thame."

POPE.

"*But health and labour's willing train*
Crowns all Thy banks with waving grain,
With beauty decks thy sylvan shades,
With livelier green invests thy glades;
And grace, and bloom, and plenty pours
O'er thy sweet meads and willowy shores,
The fields where herds unnumber'd rove,
The laurell'd path, the beechen grove,
The oak, in lonely grandeur free,
Lord of the forest and the sea;
The spreading plain, the cultured hill,
The tranquil cot, the restless mill,
The lonely hamlet, calm and still;
The village spire, the busy town,
The shelving bank, the rising down;
The fisher's punt, the peasant's home,
The woodland seat, the regal dome,—
In quick succession rise to charm
The mind with virtuous feelings warm;

Till where thy widening current glides
To mingle with the turbid tides,
Thy spacious breast displays unfurl'd
The ensigns of th' assembled world."

As at the beginning of these Notes it may have been put down as a grand omission that I did not deal with salmon, so at the end of them it may be noticed that I have omitted a discourse on eels and lamperns. I have already given a reason—a good one, I think—for the first omission; for the last I can offer two. The one is that I have no space left for eels (to say nothing of lamperns), having already transgressed the number of pages assigned for my memoranda and miscellaneous chit-chat; and to deal fully with eels, and the variety of questions connected with these strange creatures, would involve a larger Note than any I have yet written. The other reason is that eels, though most interesting *animals*, hardly seem to rank with *fish*, I do not mean ichthyologically, but with fish which the angler makes the object of his pursuit. Of course this remark may apply to some of the "small fry" just treated of; but, be this as it may, I must, at least for the present, leave eels to take care of themselves.

There were other Notes I had intended to make, as a sort of Part III. to this piscatorial *farrago*, e.g. on "Fishing in Devonshire," and especially in Slapton Lea; on "Fishing in the Eastern Counties," especially in the "Norfolk Broads;" and on "Pisciculture and the Preservation of Fresh-water Fish"—but all these must be omitted simply because there is no room for them. My last Note, then, just by way of making a "tail" to my modest contribution to angling literature—(call it

"padding," if you like, good critic!)—will be on "Thames Angling."

I am essentially a Thames angler, as my readers have probably discovered long ere this. I love the dear old river above all other rivers. I was born on the Thames, i. e. on its banks; I learnt my Latin grammar and the grammar of angling on the Thames; and I took my degree both as M.A. and, to perpetuate a threadbare old joke, as a senior (wr)angler on the Thames. I know every inch of the river, from its source (which is its source, by the way?) to the Nore. I could map every reach from Oxford to Richmond, tell the name and depth of almost every "swim," and the spot where grows each rare aquatic plant, such as the rich *butomus*, or flowering rush, and the elegant *villarsia*, the latter of which, by the way, can only number about six patches in the 150 miles.

I—may my apparent egotism and my enthusiasm, too, be pardoned—admire the soft beauty of the Thames, its quiet "home" scenery, such as no other river in the world can boast, its varied volume of water,—

> "Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full,"

(except in the wretched "flood" times), its thousand charms, which seem to gather rather than lose force as years pass on,—

> "Tending to the darksome hollows,
> Where the frosts of winter lie."

"Once a Thames angler, always a Thames angler," I believe. It cannot be otherwise. If, in the hey-day of youth, even before we cared for fishing as a sport or viewed it as an art, by chance we formed one of a party

in a Thames fisherman's punt, a mark was made in our memory never to be effaced. We were certain to repeat the experiment deliberately, and ten to one we became enthusiastic Thames anglers. Thus a modern lyric poet commemorates his "early days" of Thames angling :—

"Was ever indolence so sweet, were ever days so fine,
As when we lounged in that old punt, and play'd with rod and line?
'Tis true few fish were caught there, but the good old ale we quaff'd;
As we chatted, too, and smoked there, and idled, dream'd, and laugh'd:
Then we thought only of to-day—of to-morrow had no fear—
For sorrow scarce had tinged the stream that flow'd thro' Blankton Weir."

As years passed on our poet evidently came to think less of the "beer and tobacco" aspect of the matter, and more of the "moral" charms of a day on the Thames. Those of us to whom a hard lot has denied the *many* days on the Thames we would wish to take, can sympathize with him as he goes on to say :—

"Amidst the whirl of weary life, its worry and its bore,
Comes back that well-known lullaby—the old weir's distant roar;
It gilds the cloud of daily toil with sunshine's fitful gleams,
It breaks upon my slumber, and I hear it in my dreams;
Like music of the good old times, it strikes upon my ear—
If there's an air can banish care, 'tis that of Blankton Weir!"

Happy the man who can take as many days on the Thames as he will! No happier man than the Thames angler—I mean here the well-to-do angler, who can command a punt and all the purtenances thereof.

No angler has a better field for his sport and his art. Perhaps, as I have already intimated, the Trent anglers are more artistic fishermen, and no one can deny that they have a splendid river for fishing. It abounds in fish of all

kinds, at least of *almost* all kinds. Drayton, hymning the grand Midland river, and alluding to the old legend which connects the word "Trent" with the French *Trente*—"thirty," says that among the other "thirties,"—

"There should be found in her of fishes *thirty* kind."

But, as a matter of fact, there are *not* thirty kinds of fish in the Trent. This may, nearer the truth, be boasted of the Thames, which, as I think I have before observed, contains a greater variety of fish than any other river in the world. And such fish!—edible and sportive beyond all other fish; and, withal, more difficult of capture than all other. The Thames, too, is a far more beautiful river than the Trent, take its whole length. Thus, unless he looks merely to the "pot," the Thames angler has a general fishing-ground surpassed by none, and the best field for the highest enjoyment of his pastime.

But your day's sport and comfort depends not a little on your puntsman, i. e. your professional Thames fisherman. He belongs to a race which has its virtues and failings and marked idiosyncrasies. He is a "study," but let me at once say by no means an unpleasant one.

I must premise, however, that by a Thames fisherman, I mean one who entirely devotes himself to his vocation—not that hybrid gentleman who is half fisherman and half poacher, or who is only the occasional owner of a leaky punt, or the mere servant of a letter-out of pleasure-boats and punts, and who, when foisted on the unwary angler, shows as little knowledge of fishing as he really has of Conic Sections or the *Novum Organum* of Aristotle, or who is a summer fisherman only, or a mere loafer on the banks, and "everything by turns and nothing long"

—I mean a *bonâ fide* Thames fisherman, who is the *bonâ fide* owner of a punt, poles, ripecks, rakes, tackle, and all the miscellaneous paraphernalia required for every variety of Thames fishing, and who attends to nothing else all the year round but waiting on "customers" when they do come, and for them when they don't. How many there may be of such fishermen between Oxford and Richmond I cannot say off-hand—perhaps at a very rough guess about a hundred, two-thirds of whom would be below, and one-third above the City Stone at Staines.

Having had a long experience of them, from fishing at almost every fishing-station on the river during the last twenty years, I have no hesitation in saying of them as a class that they are a very good set of fellows. They are "active and intelligent," as reporters, when under some little obligation, say of police officers, and "civil and obliging," as they say of station-masters and other officials. One of their chief virtues is a love of, or at least the practice of order and cleanliness. Their cottages are generally models of these graces, though their wives must be credited with part of this commendation. It is indeed a treat for a smoke-begrimed Londoner to find himself the temporary tenant of a sitting-room and bedroom in one of these humble little domiciles. He may hardly be able to "swing a cat" in the parlour, and upstairs his tub may occupy the greater part of the superficial area, clear of furniture; but he sits in an atmosphere of cleanliness and neatness, and sleeps in the same, surrounded with hangings of spotless white dimity, with bedroom furniture to match. He is not troubled by the bloodthirsty marauders of the insect world that "walk by night," nor, if he lies awake for a brief space, by the noises "that make night hideous."

The only sounds he hears are those of the wind softly whispering through the reeds or osier beds, the rippling of the stream, the plaintive call of the moor-hen, or the somniferous music of some not far distant weir. Presuming he has, what most anglers have, a quiet conscience, he can, if anywhere, at a Thames fisherman's cottage "sleep the sleep of the just."

And what shall I say of the creature comforts supplied to the angler? This will depend upon circumstances; but as far as cooking goes the Thames fisherman's wife invariably does all for him that culinary art can do, particularly in serving his own fish as only a fisherman's wife can.

I have already said so much on this point, and, indeed, laid myself open to the charge of repetition, that I will return at once to the fishermen themselves. They are, as I have said, given to order and cleanliness. To this their punts bear witness. "A place for everything and everything in its place" is their motto; and as the angler takes his seat on a Windsor chair or punt-well in the morning, bound for the happy fishing-grounds, he admires the well-mopped craft, without a speck of dirt even on the foot-boards, and the thoughtful and orderly disposal of all the requisites for the day's sport. I never knew a good fisherman who had not the bump of order and tidiness. The next thing which attracts your attention is your fisherman's punting skill. What an easy thing punting looks! It is only just pushing a punt along with a pole, just as playing billiards is only giving a sharp tap to a ball with the end of a cue! Just try it then, and see what you can make of it. I remember once punting a lady for many long hours on a summer's day,

and hoping almost against hope that she would eventually say a word or two commendatory of my skill—I had learnt the art by continuous practice as a boy—but she made no sign. She was one of those many who think that "what is done easily is easy to be done." At last I ventured an observation on the subject of punting, and elicited an encouraging reply to the effect that she thought any one could do it. I then suggested that as it was so easy she should punt me a little way—we were then in the dead water above a Thames lock—to which she readily assented and essayed the definite task of punting a distance of about 150 yards to the lock, on the completion of which I was to stand indebted to her for a pair of Piver's best gloves. To say that she made no progress would be untrue. After a quarter of an hour's gyrations, collisions with the banks, and crab-like movements, we had advanced about twenty yards, and then the attempt was given up in despair, and apparently with no slight mortification. I resumed the pole, but nothing further was said on the subject of punting. I must confess that few things annoy me more than the consciousness that spectators often witness one practising an art which has taken years perhaps to acquire, and are never struck with the idea that it is an art at all, but rather think it is within the compass of any ordinary fool. Some lubber, for instance, will watch you with all the intense vacancy of which he is capable spinning for jack; or from the top of a weir for trout, deftly gathering your line in the palm of your left hand to be released with unerring accuracy again for a throw of some forty yards or so; and think, if indeed he is capable of thinking, that there is "nothing in it." Just so as regards punting. Everybody thinks

there is nothing in it, and that everybody could do it if he cared to try. Well then, my self-complacent reader, I would again say "try it." If you have never punted before, I would give you a year to get a punt up stream the last two hundred yards to Monkey Island, or by the Eton playing fields to Windsor Weir, and a decade to fix it to two ripecks, as you see a Thames fisherman do with such apparent ease—and you would not do it. I give you this *fair* time for your work because you would probably be overboard, and perhaps food for fishes, before you had hardly begun your task, and learnt to think more humbly of yourself and more highly of others' skill. If you want to know the difficulty of punting, as I have said "try it." If you want to learn the art, take some lessons from, and diligently observe the unequalled skill of a Thames fisherman.

But here is a terrible digression—*redeamus*. The punt is fixed above the destined swim, only to be moved when erratic barges threaten to sweep you bodily away, or the wash of a stinko-rattle-pot, by a euphemism entitled "a steam launch," causes your punt to draw her ripecks from the bed of the river, or for piscatorial reasons, you think a change of scene desirable. When so moored, your Thames fisherman is "all attention." No nurse or body servant is more devoted to you, or anticipative of all your wants. He plumbs your depth, he baits your hook, he watches your float, he administers the carefully concocted groundbait, he lands your fish, he unbungs the stone bottle, he uncorks your Bass, Allsopp, or Guinness, he drinks to your "good luck, sir," he fills your pipe and lights it (and his own too), he holds an umbrella over you in the rain and a sunshade in the mid-day

heat. He is "friend, philosopher, guide," all in one, and from sunrise to sunset your "most obedient, humble," devoted and withal scientific, servant. What can you want more? And yet more you can have if you wish it, and often when you don't. He will talk the livelong day —*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*—and especially *de rebus piscatoriis*, being a very walking, or rather sitting or standing, encyclopædia of Thames fishing and general halieutics. And who shall blame him? Though perhaps you, as a scientific angler, may know quite as much about fishing as he does, he considers he is as much paid for talking as for attendance; and it would be well if some anglers listened to his talk and followed his advice.

No young professional fisherman has a better chance of learning all there is to learn about fishing, at least about Thames fishing. The Thames fisherman of even a few years' experience has had the opportunity of seeing and hearing a vast deal about fishing from his "customers," as well as of gaining practical knowledge himself, especially of the best way of fishing what may be called his own waters. He sees all the dodges and expedients of a variety of anglers, many of whom on the Thames are consummate artists; he notices all the successes and failures, if he is observant, as he generally is; he hears all the latest theories, and ponders them in his heart. As a rule, therefore, though they may not have much originality about them, Thames fishermen are thoroughly "up to their work," and he who would wish to become a thoroughly practical angler, cannot do better than sit at the feet of these piscatorial Gamaliels, hear all they have to say, and try to copy all they do.

A special characteristic of the Thames professional fisher-

men is that they never are, or never seem to be, weary of the longest day's fishing, however unproductive of sport it may be. One would have thought that they would be as sick of fishing as a confectioner is of tarts and sweetmeats, or a boy of his Latin grammer, or a pedagogue of instruction. The contrary, however, is, or seems to be, the case. They never, with few exceptions, appear to be weary of doing their best to give their customers the opportunity of getting the best day's sport possible. They will stick to a swim all day long if you like, suggesting and trying all kinds of expedients to insure success; or they will "change the venue," according to your caprice, and as often as you suggest, without a murmur. They are hopeful when all the angler's hopes are expended. They are in a word as indefatigable in their endeavours and as inexhaustible in their resources to perfect a day's fishing as they are appreciative of the "grub," drink, and tobacco with which "customers" by the unwritten law of the river are supposed to provide them. The appetite and "drinketite" of a Thames fisherman are proverbial.

Hitherto I have spoken of the virtues of the Thames fishermen. What shall I say of their faults and failings? As a rule they have none but such as are common to humanity. Here and there you may meet with one who does not come up to the high standard which my long experience assigns to them as a class. Here and there you may come upon an idler and shuffler, who shirks getting up early in the morning, and constantly betrays a wish that the day was at an end, who likes as little trouble as possible, and implies all kinds of objections to changing the punt to another swim or rigging up fresh tackle for

another kind of fishing, who does not trouble himself to keep a supply of worms and live-bait, who does not even keep his punt tidy, and who generally forgets some requisite for a day's sport. Happily, however, this species of fisherman is as rare as a Thames trout of twelve pounds.

A weakness of Thames fishermen consists in their hyperbolical narratives of days' sport they have had with other customers, of the astounding takes of barbel, of leviathan jack and trout, and of fishing incidents generally. Another weakness with some is their persistent refusal to acknowledge anything in the way of ignorance in any branch of fishing. You may tell them something they never heard of before, or show them some excellent tackle on a brand-new principle they never heard of; but their line is to pretend to know all about it, and *nil admirari*. Sometimes they will even wax contradictory, and, however good an angler you may be, they except to all your theories and "crab" your practice. In fact, here and there you will meet with a thoroughly cross-grained, cantankerous fellow, who completely spoils your day's enjoyment, whether you have good sport or not.

One failing they all seem more or less to have. They hate a gentleman who keeps his own punt and fishes "on his own hook;" and they even look askance at the humble and persevering bank angler. They seem to think the Thames was made for *them* and their customers exclusively, and that no one should dare to fish it without their assistance.

Some few, especially in the early part of the trout season, go out by themselves and spin and live-bait the most likely waters. This is an unpardonable sin, and an amateur

angler should never employ a fisherman who follows this practice. Considering the expense of a day's fishing on the Thames, and how many blank days a trout fisherman has in a season, and the paucity of the trout themselves, the fishermen who are paid for their services should not attempt to thin the fish, or worry them into shyness by additional fishing and frequently pricking them.

And now I have done with them, though I could add much more, a little to their dispraise and very much to their praise. It is a hardish life for them in one sense, and a very precarious mode of earning a livelihood. There are the fence months, from the end of February to the 1st of June, during which they can do no bottom fishing. [By the way, March might well be included in the fishing season, and before long I have no doubt it will be.] And there are the long winter months, with many continuous weeks of flood or frost or rough weather, when they hardly see a customer. Ten shillings a-day, therefore, and his grub is by no means an exorbitant sum to pay for a punt and its appliances and the fisherman's services, and often his tackle. A careful man, who lays himself out by civility and attention to business to make friends, may be able to put by a few pounds "against a rainy day;" and if he is really a good fisherman and can show his customers sport, he may expect a trifle extra now and then when a good trout is landed, or a large take of fish brought off. Where the genuine Thames fishermen of another generation are to come from, I do not know. The anglers are on the increase; professioual fishermen, for some reason or other, are not. Few seem to thiuk the vocation good enough for their sons to follow in their steps.

Here at last I must "wind up my line," and say fare-

well to my readers. The pleasantest memories of my life are connected with the dear old Thames. May theirs be also!

"Glide gently thus, for ever glide,
Oh, Thames! that anglers all may see
As lovely visions by thy side,
As now, fair river, come to me.
Oh, glide, fair stream, for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing!"

THE END.

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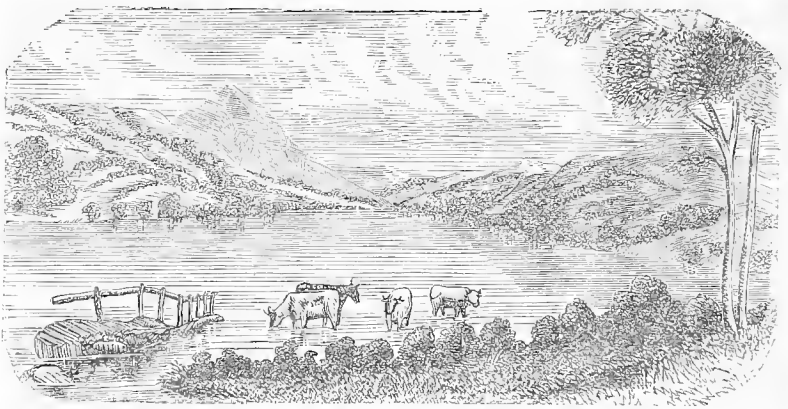

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Wellington	170¾	32 2	24 5	14 1½	55 0	40 0	28 3
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Totnes	222¾	41 5	29 3	16 8	64 7	46 4	33 4
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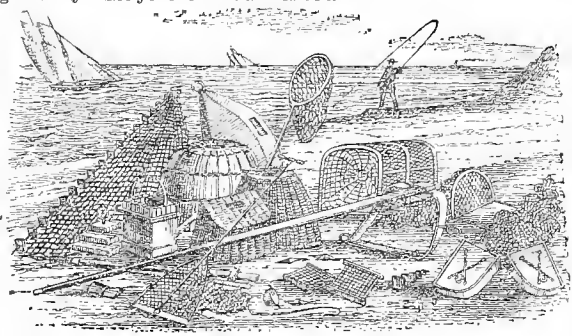

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